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PACIFIC STUDIES

Vol. 17, No. 1

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THE DOMESTICATION OF CATHOLICISM ON TOBI

Peter W. Black

George Mason University

In this article I examine public dimensions of the religious life of the people of Tobi, an island in the then Palau District of the United States Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, as I found it a quarter of a century ago. I present this examination in the belief that, whatever might have been the immediate particularities of the Tobian situation, in its general outlines it had much in common with what might be called neotraditional sociocultural organization in many parts of colonial Micronesia and beyond.

Of course, contemporary Palau is a quite different place than it was twenty-five years ago, and the situation of Tobians in it is also very different.¹ As Nero (1987) makes clear, though, the present in Palau is *always* grounded in the past. This holds no less true for Tobians than for ethnic Palauans. This article, then, can be seen as a contribution to the study of an obscure part of Palau's past that in turn may help to shed light on its present and future. Beyond this ethnographic goal, however, there is the comparative or ethnological.

The Tobi of this essay was a neotraditional society. In this context "neotraditional" means a way of life focused on Christianity and copra, with modified elements of the precontact adaptation still important, especially in the subsistence system and local political arrangements.² Thus, an analysis of the religious pole of that way of life in one such society may well prove useful in understanding the general historical phenomenon.

After laying out the ethnographic and historical context, I sketch the outlines of ancient Tobian religion before turning to the conversion to Roman Catholicism in the 1930s. I conclude with an analysis of the role

Tobian Catholicism played in the life of the island community during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Organized religious activity on Tobi was primarily an external, social phenomenon rather than an internal, individual or private affair. My focus here is on the use of religion for society's ends—a focus that accords well with Tobian religious attitudes. I trace the continuities in Tobian religious attitudes over time and demonstrate that as surely as they molded the prehistoric religious life of the island, they shaped Roman Catholicism on Tobi. This is the explanation for the title of this article: Tobian conversion *to* Catholicism was at the same time a conversion *of* Catholicism. Even though neotraditional Tobian Catholicism contained strong traces of pre-Christian Micronesian religious tradition, Roman Catholicism did not completely yield to the constraints of its new island home. Furthermore, some of those features that resisted change caused a good deal of difficulty for Tobian society. Thus, I will argue that, along with the social benefits brought by conversion (and they were considerable), certain characteristics of the introduced religion brought new problems.

Neotraditional Tobian Society

Tobi, along with Merir, Pulo Anna, Sonsorol, and the usually uninhabited islet of Helen, is one of the Southwest Islands of Palau. Approximately 120 people called the island home during the early 1970s. At any one time, about half of these people were living on Tobi itself while the rest were in Palau proper, 380 miles north. The entire Tobian population was Roman Catholic, having been converted soon after the failure of a brief period of secularism forty years earlier. Politically and economically part of Palau, Tobi, like the other Southwest Islands, was culturally and linguistically much more closely related to the Trukic low islands and atolls of the Central and Western Carolines to the east—places like Ifaluk (Lutz 1988), Lamotrek (Alkire 1966), and Uliithi (Lessa 1966)—than it was to Palau (Parmentier 1987; Smith 1983).

On Tobi, people lived by gardening and fishing; they also produced some copra for export. The cash brought in by copra sales (along with the government salaries attached to the positions of health aide and schoolteacher and cash remittances from relatives working in Palau) was used to purchase the few necessities Tobians did not produce themselves. People lived in thatch-roofed houses clustered along the island's western shore. Public buildings included a meetinghouse, school, and a dispensary. The most important public space in the community was the

concrete, thatch- (and later tin-) roofed church that served as a center around which life's daily, weekly, and yearly cycles were organized.

While in Palau proper, Tobians lived in Eang, a tiny Southwest Island community near the small port town of Koror, Palau's capital and main business and governmental center. There they took advantage of the high school, hospital, stores, and jobs not available on their home island. There, too, the church played an important role in the community's life. Tobians, together with the other Southwest Islanders in Eang, were active participants in the life of the Catholic mission in Koror and, in the early 1970s, were in the process of rebuilding a church in their own hamlet. The rebuilt church would make it possible to hold twice-daily prayers and Sunday services in their immediate vicinity. The Eang community, like the one on Tobi, used these religious gatherings as a kind of framework around which the day's and week's activities were structured. Of course, in Eang priests from the mission in Koror were readily available, while on Tobi they were not.

No priest, in fact, had ever lived on Tobi. At best, the island received four visits by priests in a year—each for only a few hours. These visits were made possible by the government ship that traveled between the Southwest Islands and Koror three or four times a year, the only means of getting to or from the island. Along with the priest from the mission and representatives of various government agencies and commercial firms, individual Tobians and their families took advantage of the ship to move back and forth between the two poles of their society—their remote, small, outer island and their urban neighborhood near the town of Koror.

Since there were no Southwest Island priests, the men sent on the ship to minister to the Tobians could only see the island with outsiders' eyes (either American or Palauan depending on who had drawn the assignment). All these priests considered Tobians to be exemplary Catholics, devout and humble. They frequently remarked on the impressive fidelity with which the priestless community maintained its twice-daily schedule of collective worship.

To these missionaries, used to the complex ecology and sociology of Palau, Tobi must have seemed incredibly simple, small and remote. But to the Tobians returning on the ship, their island was the focal point of their world, a world, moreover, that was continuously menaced by forces of evil and chaos manifest in the many evil ghosts that threatened to overwhelm the island. Therefore, once back home on their island, those returnees would join with everyone else in communal efforts to protect their world from those ghosts. And those communal efforts

were, in fact, the same twice-daily prayer services of which the priests were so approving.

This interpretation, as well as the interpretation of other features of Tobian Christianity, rests upon an understanding of the ecological, cultural, and historical matrix in which they arose. It is necessary at this point, therefore, to turn to that setting.

The Island Context

Tobi's small size (about fifty-nine hectares, or less than one-fourth of a square mile) and remote location (about 150 miles from the nearest inhabited island) were important, for they provided the parameters within which the Tobians created their way of life. Also important was the geological and biological simplicity of the island. Unlike a coral atoll, Tobi possessed neither a lagoon nor an extensive reef system; there was only a single low island, fringed all around by reef. At the center lay a depression, once completely reclaimed for gardens but slowly reverting to swamp as population pressure eased. From the center, the land rose up on all sides before sloping off to beach and reef. The soil was sandy and, except where humus had been created by gardeners, not very fertile. Plentiful rainfall gave the island a lushly green appearance, but this appearance was somewhat deceptive—only a limited range of plants and animals occurred on the island. In this sense, the island was impoverished. Yet many of the species that did appear were so well adapted to the island's conditions that they flourished in abundance.

Much of Tobi's abundance resulted from the activity of its people. From the artificial fish habitats built out on the reef to the coconut plantations and gardens of the interior, the Tobians had reworked their island ecosystem over time to create a more sustaining habitat. In this sense, the island was almost as much an artifact of their culture as were the skillfully designed and carefully built thatch canoe houses that lined the shore or the even more complex and functionally elegant outrigger canoes with which Tobians exploited the resources of the sea.

Over the years, each of Micronesia's colonial powers also left traces of its presence. Towering over the island were several ancient coconut trees with Imperial Germany's double-headed eagle carved deep into their trunks. These trees were the survivors of extensive (for Tobi anyway) coconut plantations mandated by the Germans to provide an export crop during their brief rule in Micronesia from 1898 to 1914. These plantations required that other vegetation be cleared from a considerable area of the island. They also provided the first regular source of

cash income—income that could be used to buy goods not produced on the island.

The Japanese, the colonial successors to the Germans from 1914 to 1945, left yet more dramatic physical traces of their presence on Tobi. Piles of mine tailings, a channel blasted in the reef, and the remnants of a causeway paralleling the channel testified to the Japanese attempt to extract resources (in this case phosphate) from the island during the days of their rule of Micronesia. Deep in the bush were several bomb craters and caves dug for bomb shelters that, along with a rusting anti-aircraft gun near the beach, recalled the unsuccessful struggle waged by the Japanese to retain their hold on Micronesia during the Second World War. During the Japanese era, Tobians became incorporated for the first time in economic, political, and social systems beyond their island horizons.

The Americans, who followed the Japanese in Micronesia, also left traces, both physical and social, of their presence. A concrete and tin school, a plywood and tin medical dispensary, and a huge galvanized water tank pointed to the investment of American resources in health and education. During this period, the pace of change accelerated—change whose direction lay in ever wider and deeper connections between Tobi and the world beyond. Yet it was also during this period that the pattern of social life on the island reached a new synthesis after the profound changes of the previous fifty years or so.

That neotraditional equilibrium—in which methods of coping with unpredictable and, at times, seemingly irresistible demands for change were created and more or less successfully deployed—was centered on Catholicism.

The conversion to Catholicism was thus a step of high importance for Tobians. It occurred at a moment in an unfolding sequence of profound and irresistible changes that had proceeded at an accelerating rate since the first appearance of European sailing vessels in the surrounding seas. Yet throughout these changes, certain fundamental orientations persisted. These orientations, toward social life, morality, and religion, played a prominent role in structuring the ways the islanders used religion to respond to the challenges of both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

I do not view precontact Tobi as an unchanging, well-balanced system. The massive excavation of the island's interior over many generations to convert swamp to taro field is testimony to the pressure that population growth imposed on the ecosystem. A model of slow, coral-reef-like development and change, recently lampooned by the late

Roger Keesing (1993), also is inadequate. But given the island's remoteness and size (or lack of it), I find it useful to build into my model of the postsettlement, precontact trajectory of Tobian history a tendency towards equilibrium seeking, a bias towards system maintenance, a striving for balance.

This brings me to a larger point: In my view Tobian history has been lived out in a series of major epochs punctuated with major junctures. The challenge for the historically minded ethnographer is to discover and then specify what transversed those junctures from one epoch to another and what did not (see White 1991, 1992). In other words, such junctures were only partial ruptures of cultural and experiential continuity. This is what makes "neotraditional" a workable category—as I am at some pains to demonstrate in this essay.

A further task, then, is to sort out the power of continuing culture to organize people's experience during major junctures and beyond. This question rapidly leads to discussion of fundamental issues for history and anthropology, demonstrated, for example, by the very interesting debate over the interpretation to be put upon the death of Captain James Cook at the hands of the Hawaiians (Sahlins 1981; Obeyesekere 1992).

The Tobian historical juncture that I am attempting to understand had as its focal point a 1931 walk taken by the newly arrived first missionary between two rows of smiling and welcoming Tobians. As I hope to demonstrate, all parties to this first encounter brought to it their particular views of what was going on, yet no one was trapped in an inescapable system of symbols that allowed no room for learning and creativity. By all evidence everyone involved (on the Tobian side at least) immediately began busily turning the story of what had occurred to their own political/ideological ends. It is there, in that process of memory and story, that one can see the threads created across historical junctures from one epoch to the next. To understand the indigenous pattern of values and cultural truths into which Catholicism was drawn, we therefore must turn to a consideration of the context in which that pattern arose.

Ancient Tobi

It is not known when the ancestors of the present population arrived on Tobi. Genealogies and chiefly chronologies make it unlikely they reached the island (which in all probability was uninhabited) any less than two hundred years before the first recorded sighting of the island

in 1710 (Eilers 1936:1). The people who settled Tobi brought with them cultural knowledge, skills, and techniques refined through countless generations of island life. The challenge faced by the first Tobians was to learn how to modify their knowledge, skills, and techniques to the specifics of their new home. That they successfully did so is proved by the survival of the society they founded.

Tobi, as an ecosystem, presented some remarkable challenges to its first settlers. Its remoteness seems to have kept it isolated from the kind of interisland system with which they were probably familiar.³ That same remoteness also meant that their descendants would be more at risk from disease on those rare occasions when their isolation was breached—the lack of regular contact with the outside world gave the Tobians no chance to build up immunities to diseases endemic in the region. Most important of all, this remoteness meant that the social system that arose on the island was remarkably self-contained. In other words, the response of that social system to the adaptive challenge posed by the Tobian ecosystem was limited almost entirely to the resources immediately at hand.

Over the course of succeeding generations two complementary processes unfolded. On one hand, the cultural tradition the first settlers brought with them was modified to fit the particular opportunities and limitations of the island. The accumulated wisdom of centuries of experience, stretching all the way back in time and space to the neolithic in Southeast Asia, provided a cultural template that was fitted to Tobi and produced a Tobi-specific variant of the Oceanic pattern. On the other hand, the island was progressively modified through the application of that Tobi-specific cultural pattern to increase its usefulness as a human habitat. Thus, over time a uniquely Tobian adaptation arose.⁴

Religion seems to have contributed greatly to the success of this adaptation, just as it had in the ancestral social system from which the first colonists had come. It was through the sacred that the balance between society and resources was monitored and reinforced, and it was through the sacred that the value of cooperation—upon which the successful exploitation of those resources depended—was mandated. In other words, part of creating a successful Tobi-specific application of the ancestral Micronesian pattern entailed ensuring that maladaptive behaviors were minimized and environmentally sound practices encouraged; this is what religion *did*.

The adaptation reached by ancient Tobian society was a kind of system, and like any system it could spin out of balance. It was highly vulnerable to environmental fluctuation, for example. Rain could fail,

local fish populations shrink, typhoons devastate the island, and the lack of complexity in the resource base left little room for alternative sources of sustenance. Human action could also have devastating effects on the system. Broadly speaking, there were two classes of activities that could threaten the adaptation—unrestrained intensification of resource utilization and uninhibited conflict. Religion was central in meeting both these threats by providing the needed restraint, the necessary inhibition.

Any attempt to create new methods of resource utilization, especially activities designed to intensify exploitation of existing resources, could easily lead to unforeseen and highly negative consequences. For example, it might be to the immediate advantage of individuals or groups to clear as much land as possible to make way for plants with high day-to-day value. If unchecked, however, this activity could denude the entire island of the various indigenous plants, shrubs, and trees that had only occasional but important utility (mostly as medicines or building materials). This danger was averted by maintaining the north end of the island as a kind of sacred preserve from which building materials and medicinal plants could be taken along with naturally occurring foods, but only as necessary and only after various religious regulations and proscriptions had been met.

Another example of religion's role in providing restraint was to be found in an extremely efficient technology for capturing large amounts of fish, which was regulated through religious means. Huge fish traps, complex structures of sticks lashed together, were lowered many fathoms deep over the outer reef edge. When retrieved several days later, they contained vast numbers of fish. Such a technology, if over-used, could have had serious consequences for the reef fisheries that provided much of the island's protein. This did not happen, however; these traps were used only as part of a religious cycle, a cycle that also regulated the use of the sacred northern lands.

Conflict, at least its disruptive dimensions, was also subject to religious control. A prerequisite for the success of the Tobian adaptation was the maintenance of cooperative and mutually supportive relations between all Tobians, regardless of any disputes that might trouble society. Tobian strategies for survival depended on achieving a high degree of cooperation and sharing of resources. A wide range of subsistence activities—from gardening to house building and maintenance to fishing—were governed by this necessity. At the same time, relations between individuals and groups of individuals could hardly remain untroubled given the island's finite resources and small area. In fact,

under some circumstances, disputes over resources, especially multiple claims to plots of land, served the interests of society as a whole: Such conflicts guaranteed that needed resources would not sit idle for lack of legitimate owners. The challenge was to prevent disputes and the hostility associated with them from disrupting the cooperation and mutual support upon which life on the island depended. Tobian culture contained a whole array of values, beliefs, institutions, and techniques to meet this challenge, and religion was foremost among them.

A sacred aura seems to have suffused the entire adaptation; thus "traditional" ways of behaving partook of the holy and deviation from them was seen as wrong. The sacred, in turn, was largely a matter of public morality, a morality that demanded cooperative and mutually supportive relationships and a kind of determined cheerfulness no matter what the provocation. Like uninhibited resource exploitation, overt interpersonal conflict was morally abhorrent and spiritually sanctioned via supernatural beings, myth, and ritual.

Traditional Tobian Religion

On precontact Tobi, as on the other low islands of the Carolines, a wide range of supernatural beings, ritual practices, and beliefs permeated daily life. A detailed reconstruction of traditional Tobian religion is not possible since the few surviving accounts are vague, contradictory, and in some respects highly implausible. Nevertheless, the general picture derived from oral tradition and early descriptions is clear enough for present purposes.⁵

Magical and divination practices were probably the most common manifestations of what could be labeled religious activity. Specialists as well as ordinary folk no doubt used magic to foretell and control the weather, diagnose and cure illness, detect thieves and protect property, and promote safe voyages, plentiful catches, healthy births, and fertile gardens.

Related to the use of magic were the numerous religious prohibitions and restrictions that surrounded many activities. The performance of magic ritual, house building and major repairs, canoe building, various medical treatments, many kinds of fishing, the physical processes of menstruation, birth and death, all seem to have been hedged about with various restrictions. Many of these restrictions served to limit resource exploitation or to minimize occasions that could trigger the expression of conflict.

Use of the sacred northern land, and its useful and coveted materials,

was tightly constrained by religious restrictions. In addition to the large number of prohibitions governing its use, this district was known to be densely populated by dangerous ghosts and people ordinarily were very reluctant to venture there. This land was associated in ritual and in daily life with the island's chief. The chief gave or withheld permission to those who wished to exploit the sacred land's resources. He also officiated at the great annual feasts in which surplus coconuts from this land were distributed to the entire population. This role raises an important point.

The central chief of Tobi was as much a religious as a political figure and he was regarded with some awe by his fellows. His semisacred aura was linked to his descent from a line of chiefs that traced itself back to the mythical "mother of the island." This woman, with her father and husband, was said to have been the first person to live on the island and to have been the founder of the Tobian social system.⁶ She was the subject of the major myth cycle, which among other things described how she set down the rules that governed many important features of the island's life. Each chief was said to have inherited this woman's special ritual knowledge and paraphernalia from his predecessor. With this inheritance, he served as the living exemplar of public morality, the most important ritual actor, and the intermediary between spirits and community.

In his role as intermediary, the chief communicated through the vehicle of trance with ancestral and other spirits. He possessed the ability to call the spirits into a small replica of a canoe, which hung, covered in offerings, in the spirit house—the main center of worship on the island. Once in the canoe, the spirits spoke to the assembled population through the chief.⁷ Most likely, these communications had to do with maintenance of harmonious cooperative relations among people and the regulation of resource exploitation within traditional parameters—the two fundamental concerns of Tobian society. Two of the three kinds of supernatural beings known to ancient Tobians, ancestral spirits and gods, were part of this system of communication. The third, evil ghosts, served other purposes.

One cannot discuss Tobian religion either ancient or contemporary without attending to that class of spirit beings called *yarus* (or "ghost" by Tobian English speakers). As a general postconversion category, *yarus* came to include all supernatural beings, including the figures of the Christian supernatural order (the Trinity, the Virgin, angels, Satan, etc.), beings who seemed rather remote from the daily life of the island and from the immediate concerns of the islanders. Much more salient

was the class of malevolent, evil ghosts who infested the island and the seas surrounding it. These beings were feared and hated for their innate evil. As such they served an important psychosocial function, representing as they did culturally constituted figures onto which socially unacceptable fears and hostilities could be displaced. The concept of evil ghost also served as a powerful metaphor for a variety of disasters, both natural and man-made.⁸ In my view, controlling those ghosts and the disasters they stood for was the main focus of Tobian religion, both ancient and contemporary. Furthermore, this pragmatic feature of Tobian religion helps explain the processes that led to the collapse of the indigenous religious system and its replacement by Roman Catholicism.

Briefly, oral histories seem to indicate that in the early years of the Japanese era, tensions rose on the island and ghost sightings increased dramatically. I shall return to this point shortly, but for now it is sufficient to note that the old rituals were clearly no longer effective in controlling ghostly activities. In other words, the old religion was failing to protect the island and its inhabitants from disaster and the old rituals were increasingly revealed as inadequate in their intended effect on everyday life. As this failure became generally acknowledged, the restrictions that were an integral part of the old religion began to be seen—especially by the young men—as onerous and unnecessary. Finally, these young men, apparently with the at least tacit agreement of the resident Japanese, the elders, and the man claiming to be chief, one night destroyed the spirit house and all the ritual paraphernalia on the island (Black 1978).

Of course, this abrupt movement into public secularism did not confront the fundamental beliefs and values that had been implicated in the crisis. Tobians continued to believe that communal religious behavior had consequences for all of society, that the sacred and secular worlds were inextricably connected, and that the relationship of the island to the supernatural, especially evil ghosts, was critically important in daily life. Yet now, during the period of secularism that followed the burning of the spirit house, they found themselves with no rituals at all with which to manage their relationship to the supernatural. The persistence of this pattern of beliefs and values together with the absence of any ritual within which to embed them explains the rapidity with which the entire population accepted Catholicism when it was offered to them about one year after the burning of the spirit house. To understand how the Tobian social system had reached this impasse, it is necessary to look at several processes that characterized the island's postcontact history.

Prelude to Conversion

During the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries a series of severe blows disrupted the Tobian adaptation. Beginning with the appearance of the first sailing ships and the creation of demand for metal, cloth, and tobacco, the fundamental requirement for successful human occupation of Tobi changed. No longer was maintaining a tried and true complex of behaviors and attitudes within well-known parameters the best possible strategy. New situations, in which those established and traditional ways of doing things were inadequate, cascaded upon the island at an increasing rate.

Three interrelated trends developed that made much of the indigenous adaptation at best irrelevant and at worst maladaptive. These trends were a decline in social isolation, an erosion of political and economic autonomy, and a steady decrease in population. Demographic collapse (from 968 in 1909, the time of the first census, to less than 200 in the early 1930s) was caused by introduced disease, which in turn was related to the progressive integration of Tobi into the larger social systems created by the colonial powers.

Thus, by the late 1920s Tobians found themselves in a grave situation. Not only were they facing a precipitous population decline, but they also had to contend with intensified Japanese efforts to exploit the island's meager resources, efforts that led, among other things, to the forced division of the sacred northern lands into individual holdings to increase copra production. Furthermore, a quarrel had erupted between claimants to the chieftainship, a quarrel made worse by the death of the previous chief while living at a German phosphate mine in Angaur in Palau. His death had led to a disruption in the flow of ritual power from generation to generation.

Given the highly pragmatic orientation of Tobian public religion—in which collective ritual was used to control social and ecological disaster (symbolized by evil ghosts)—it is not surprising that confidence in the ability of traditional ritual to accomplish these ends finally eroded away as one disaster after another struck the island. It is less obvious, perhaps, that the increasing stress of the situation very likely was reflected in an increase in ghost sightings—an increase that confirmed people's worst fears about their ability to retain control of the fate of their society. To develop this point, we need to look a little more closely into the psychology (and sociology) of ghost sightings.

Ghost Encounters

An encounter with a ghost was a horrifying experience for a Tobian, with the power to bring even the most self-confident adult close to panic; such an encounter also had a strong communal dimension. As soon as a rumor flashed through the community that a ghost had been sighted, the entire island was plunged into a kind of nervous terror, which took days to dissipate. Whatever else was occurring during a ghost encounter, a tremendous amount of fear and hostility was expressed not only by the poor unfortunate who had met the ghost, but by everyone else as well. As I indicated above, it seems to me that a good deal of that emotion was a result of the frictions of social life, frictions that were allowed no other expression.

In my opinion (and I closely investigated a number of sightings that occurred while I lived among the Tobians), to "meet" a ghost was to interpret amorphous sensory stimuli as a ghost. Beliefs about ghosts (creatures of the twilight and the night, weirdly shaped, and incredibly dangerous) facilitated the interpretation of poorly perceived, eerie shadows, shapes, sounds, or smells as a ghost from which one must flee as quickly as possible. Yet, obviously, not every amorphous stimulus resulted in a ghost sighting.

At different times individuals were more or less predisposed to see ghosts and this depended on a number of factors. I think the primary variable was the amount of anxiety present. The more unexpressed anxiety and hostility a person was experiencing, the more likely it was that he or she would encounter a ghost. Increased rates of unexpressed anxiety and hostility, in turn, were at least partly a function of rapid social change. In a society in which traditional patterns and strategies had been valorized as sacred, the old ways of doing things were failing and new ones were being tried out in a context of rapid population decline, economic change, and political instability. Of course, this process probably was mediated through social structures, especially families, so that it was in intimate experiences with close kin that the rapid social change was translated into interpersonal tension and thus intrapsychic hostility and anxiety. Those who, for whatever reason, were less able to sustain that tension were those most at risk for ghost encounters. This was the pattern that obtained in later years and it makes sense to extrapolate it to that earlier era, especially given the existence of oral tradition.

By the first decades of this century, then, a vicious spiral had been set in motion in which traditional ritual became ever less capable of meet-

ing the needs of the community. An ever increasing rate of change and, hence, anxiety probably led to an ever increasing rate of ghost sightings, which then led to an ever decreasing confidence in the existing social mechanisms for dealing with either change or ghosts. It is thus understandable why, by the late 1920s, Tobians had come to the decision to do away completely with public religious ritual, its associated onerous prohibitions, its no-longer-awe-inspiring religious artifacts such as the sacred canoe, and even with the very buildings in which it had been enacted.

The dynamic that resulted in the ever increasing number of ghost sightings was not eased by this radical decision, however. In fact, quite the contrary must have occurred; this was a consequence of the persistence of the complex of beliefs and attitudes about the supernatural, about religious ritual, and about the self. People still believed in ghosts and their evilness. Ghosts were still disasters, in and of themselves, and symbolic of disaster in general. Ghost sightings still reflected anxiety and fear closely related both to the loss of autonomy, isolation, and population and to the continued recognition of the necessity of cooperative and mutually supportive relationships. Overt expressions of hostility towards one's fellows were still strongly sanctioned. And people still saw ritual as a kind of technology for suppressing ghosts and preventing disasters. During the period of secularism, therefore, the lack of such a technology and the persistence of all those other factors meant that the frequency of ghost sightings most likely continued to increase.

Small wonder, therefore, that when that Spanish Jesuit stepped ashore in February 1931, about a year after the burning of the spirit house, and began to teach a new set of rituals associated with a new supernatural order, he met with great success. It took him less than a week to convert and baptize many of the island's men, women, and children, and over the next few years the entire population became members of the church. The impact of this event was so profound that to this day the vocabulary of religion on Tobi is largely derived from the missionary's mother tongue. The words for the deity, for angels, for the seventh day of the week (the day of rest and worship), for the great holidays of the liturgical year, and for the church itself are all borrowed from Spanish. Tobians became devout and faithful practitioners of Catholicism. Furthermore, they used their new religion as the centerpiece of the neotraditional way of life they shortly thereafter synthesized. It is appropriate, therefore, to ask what is known about the events of that conversion.

Conversion to Catholicism

Three separate versions of the conversion of the Tobians are known to me. Two are contained in Tobian oral histories and the third in mission documents. The three accounts do not agree in all details, nor do they lend themselves equally to the same reading. I have published an analysis based primarily on one of the Tobian versions—what can be thought of as the mainstream or perhaps chiefly version (Black 1977, 1978, 1988). The other Tobian version forms a sharp counterpoint to that chiefly version and represents the point of view of a family that regarded itself as the dispossessed true holder of the title of chief. The mission version, the third, is recounted by Hezel and is based on mission publications and archival material (1991:215, 217–218).

Space is not available here for a full discussion of these three versions, let alone an attempt to reconcile them into an authoritative account. Certain features, though, must be noted. The chiefly version (call this Version I) names the missionary who carried out the initial mass baptisms as “Father (*Pasre*) Marino”; both of the other versions (Versions II and III) name him as “Father Elias.” Now, among the documents unearthed by Hezel is a reasonably detailed first-person account of this episode by a missionary named Father Elias Fernandez (Fernandez 1931). Thus, it is highly likely that in this particular, at least, Version I is mistaken. It is not accidental, I think, that this error entered the tales told about the conversion by the chief and his loyalists (who in the late 1960s and early 1970s included most of the surviving participants in those events). After all, there was a Father Marino associated with the mission at the same time as Father Elias and, furthermore, the chief who told this tale was himself named Marino.

Given that the local understanding of the history of the conversion was at the same time a history of the creation of the moral basis of the social order, one can understand the process by which the chief and his loyalists incorporated the chief's name into that history. But since I inadvertently have inscribed this error into written history by publishing several accounts based on that chiefly tradition, I think it important that this error be corrected here.⁹

Another area in which Version I can now be shown to be probably counterfactual has to do with the conditions under which the conversion proceeded. At first glance, this appears to bear directly on the argument being developed in this essay. Version I presented the visit of the missionary as a bolt from the blue. The missionary is presented almost

as a *deus ex machina*, arriving on a Japanese steamer one day and sweeping the entire society into the arms of the church by the force of his arguments and the symbolic power of his acts. In fact, the corpus of those statements and acts forms the basis of what seems to me to be a kind of theology that the chief and the elders used to justify their Catholicism.

By 1968, the Catholicism of the people who led the neotraditional Tobian order (many of them participants in the great events of 1931) was based on a kind of quasi-theological foundation expressed in a myth built around the figure of the man (Marino/Elias) who converted them. This myth both justified and perpetuated their faith in the protective powers of Catholic ritual. Furthermore, it revealed those Tobians at their most creative; whether consciously or unconsciously they used the missionary's actions and statements to create a way out of the crisis in which they found themselves.

Just as the myth of the founding of Tobian society had grounded the aboriginal adaptation in the sacred, so did this new myth serve to validate many of the shifts in social life that resulted from the loss of population, isolation, and autonomy by grounding them in the new dispensation—Roman Catholicism. The new myth, like the ancient one, acquired its force from the way in which it expressed fundamental Tobian assumptions and values. However, it is now clear that here too the memory of these events encoded in Version I had been shaped at least as much by the ends to which this tale has been put as by the actual events themselves. Versions II and III agree that substantial preparation, carried out by Tobians who had earlier returned from Koror where they had already converted or had at least gained considerable knowledge of the new religion, preceded the visit of the missionary.¹⁰ I find these two accounts, in this respect at least, convincing.

What is the import of this revision for the analysis being developed here? The claim that conversion resulted from conditions particular to the island seems subverted by Father Elias's report of marching to a "chapel" between lines of welcoming, reverent islanders and by his surprise at the remarkable amount of knowledge they already possessed about the new faith (Fernandez 1931). This is not necessarily the case, however. According to Father Elias, and there is no reason to doubt this, that knowledge and that chapel were the result of the activities of Tobian Catholics who had preceded him to the island (he states that there were seven baptized people there when he arrived). His account also makes it quite likely that the mission had been receiving requests from Tobian converts in Koror to bring Catholicism to their home

island. The Tobians in Koror lived in the same community with people from the other Southwest Islands and the mission had already had considerable success among the other Southwest Islanders in Koror and especially in Sonsorol the previous year.

Clearly the conversion to Catholicism was part of a wider social movement, grounded ultimately in colonial power and its locally produced dislocations. Yet, this movement worked itself out differently in each human community in which it unfolded. On Sonsorol, for example, an early missionary effort had come to grief in 1710, when no trace of a pair of Belgian Jesuits from the Philippines could be found by the ship that finally relocated the island several years after the two priests had more or less inadvertently gone ashore. The martyrdom of those missionaries came to be associated with Sonsorol's rapid population decline of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and especially the drastic decline in the number of live births. At some point, significant opinion on Sonsorol came to accept this connection. I suspect that acceptance played a large role in the subsequent conversion of the Sonsorolese.

On Tobi, on the other hand, the despair that resulted in the overthrow of the local religion and the ferment that followed were manifest in the continual encounters of people with evil ghosts. This, I think, was the problem people were trying to solve and this was the use to which they put the news that Sonsorol had converted. (Indeed, although there is no way at present to verify this, it may well be that the news of Sonsorol's conversion played an important role in the decision to rid the island of the burdensome remnants of the old religion.) In any event, the people who returned to the island as Christians could promote Catholicism as a set of rituals with which to protect the island from ghosts. In this case, the building of the chapel can be seen as an attempt either to bring the new religion into play even before the priest arrived or to at least prepare for his arrival. That a local agenda, as well as the priest's, was served by the conversion can be seen in the last entry of Father Elias's account of his visit. There he recounts the erection on the Tobian shore of a cross ten meters tall, other crosses at each house, and still others for a Via Crucis (Way of the Cross) in order, he says, "to chase off the demons."¹¹

The Uses of Tobian Catholicism

Whatever the mix of motives and desires, confusion, and manipulation that led to the conversion of the Tobians, it proved remarkably durable.

Six years later, for example, when a Japanese scientist visited the island, he was moved to remark on the devotion of the islanders to the priests as well as the impressive amount of money (to him at least) the priests collected from the Southwest Islands on their pastoral rounds (Motoda 1939:103–104). In the following years, Roman Catholicism became central to the Tobians' way of life. As indicated earlier, time itself came to unfold to a Catholic liturgical rhythm. Days, weeks, and years were segmented by collective religious activity that structured the life of both individuals and community. Birth, marriage, and death were all deeply marked by the Church's sacraments.

At the same time, much of Tobi's pre-Catholic culture remained part of the island's religious life. The chief played a major role in ensuring Tobi's character as a Christian place just as his predecessors had acted to maintain the sacred quality of life in the ancient past. Rituals were still used to suppress ghosts. Even the northern land was still sacred—it was home to the island's cemetery.

Catholicism proved highly useful in the Tobian social system once it had been domesticated and incorporated within the neo-Tobian cultural meaning system. Among the other ends to which it was put, Catholicism was used to validate local understandings of ghosts and disasters, and its rituals were appropriated as ways for dealing with them.

Over time, however, many of the conditions that had led to the crisis resolved by the conversion no longer obtained. Yet because the solutions to these earlier difficulties were themselves now embedded in the sacred, they were resistant to ordinary processes of debate, negotiation, and change. By the early 1970s, several of those solutions had threatened to become obsolete, and one in particular had become severely disadvantageous. This had to do with marriage.

One of the major difficulties facing Tobian society at the time it adopted Catholicism was the loss of the homestead as the basis of social organization. All economic and political activity once had been predicated upon the existence of homesteads, which appear to have been the fundamental residential unit in precontact Tobian society. Homesteads were composed of sets of married sisters, their children, and their husbands. Each married couple and their young children lived in a separate household. These households were clustered into homesteads that exploited the lands belonging to the sisters' lineage (subclan kinship group). This system rested on the sibling bond between sisters, which was much more durable than the extremely fragile marriage tie.

Traditional rules governing marriage allowed a wide variety of "mar-

ital" relationships, which involved varying numbers of people and varying lengths of time. Seven exogamous matrilineal clans were the major factor that structured marriage. They divided the populace into seven intermarrying categories of people. The clans traced their ancestry back to the incestuous unions of the children of the woman who founded Tobian society. They were thus part of the sacred inheritance, and the bonds between siblings (and mothers and children) upon which the clans rested were given supernatural sanction.

As the population shrank in the early years of this century, finding a marriage partner became increasingly difficult. At the same time, individual households (based on marriage) replaced homesteads (based on sisterhood) as the crucial structural unit in the organization of political and economic life. The old system of subclan lineages and hamlets (homestead groupings scattered around the island) that had yielded residential clusters of closely related homesteads was no longer viable. The Japanese-mandated relocation of everyone into one village and the decline in population that left many lineages either extinct or too small to be active left the household as the single viable unit remaining in the society. Yet the traditional marriage bond was too fragile to bear the weight that circumstance now placed on it. Christianity, by sanctifying marriage, strengthened that bond at least in the sense of endowing it with a sacred character.

The impact of Christianity on Tobian marriage was perhaps the most profound and far-reaching of all the transformations brought by the conversion. In place of a secular and highly flexible system, in which each person could expect to be married to a number of different people during his or her lifetime, an extremely rigid and restricted system was adopted. Although the initial problem—the weakness of marriage—was solved by making it a sacred institution, the adoption of Catholic marriage rules created severe social problems over time. Three features of Catholic marriage rules were at issue: the requirement of lifetime monogamy, bilateral incest avoidance, and the necessity of a church-sanctioned wedding.

Lifetime monogamy in the Tobian context translated into a prohibition against establishing a household with anyone but one's first spouse as long as that person was alive. This rule was crucial in the transformation of marriage into the central structural element in Tobian society. It gave the marriage bond a strength it had never had before. However, it also exacerbated the difficulty that getting married posed for many people. Given the small pool of potential spouses and the necessity for marriage before one could set up a household and become a central political

and economic actor, the rule requiring lifetime monogamy made the cost of each marriage very high to every unmarried person. Acquiring a spouse, therefore, became a highly competitive and difficult process and the source of much communal tension and conflict.

The difficulty was intensified by the requirement of adherence to the Catholic incest rule that prohibits marriage between both patrilineally and matrilineally related people who are closer than what are commonly called fourth cousins. This rule contrasted sharply with Tobian pre-Christian incest rules, which allowed patrilineal cousins of all degrees to marry. Further narrowing the circle of potential mates was the retention of the clan system with its rule of clan exogamy.

Finally, there was the rule that no marriage could occur without the sanction of a priest. Examination of this requirement shows most clearly the manner in which marriage had changed from a secular to a sacred institution. It meant that every marriage required a priest's blessing, which in turn meant that the parties involved had to convince the mission that their proposed union met the Christian requirements of monogamy and incest avoidance. It also meant that the possibilities for modifying the institution of Tobian marriage to meet the exigencies of the social situation were quite limited. In other words, the rule made the mission an unwitting accomplice in the many bitter struggles over marriage that ran beneath the pleasant surface of Tobian social life. Sometimes it even made the priest an unconscious pawn in one of those struggles as individuals tried to disrupt a proposed marriage by convincing him that the match violated one or more of the church's regulations.

A more positive feature of Tobian Catholicism can be seen in the three ways in which Tobians used it to ease their situation in Eang, their community in Palau. Catholicism provided them with a strong and ready-made component in the creation of a pan-Southwest Island identity, with a vehicle for connecting to an important sector of Palauan society, and with a powerful institution to protect and advance their interests.

The Eang community, comprising people from all the Southwest Islands, was encapsulated within the much larger and very different Palauan society. Just as all Tobians were Roman Catholic, so too were the people of the other Southwest Islands. Thus a common religion (along with versions of a common language, culture, and political situation) provided the basis for building a Southwest Island sociocultural system and identity within the Palauan world. In this light, the reconstruction of the church in Eang can be seen as both an expression and a reinforcement of Eang's character as a Catholic community.

Southwest Islanders were not the only Catholics in Palau. There was also a large and active group of ethnically Palauan Catholics. In the same way as Tobians used Catholicism as an element of their identity as Southwest Islanders, so they also used it to connect to people and groups in the larger society of Palau in which they were embedded. Many Tobians who succeeded within the Palauan social system did so at least partly on the basis of connections they had established with Palauan fellow Catholics through the church.

In my opinion, and in the opinion of many Tobians, the most beneficial consequence of their Catholicism was found in the many efforts of the Catholic mission on behalf of the islanders. Priests were often very helpful to Tobians attempting to cope with government and commercial institutions in Palau and beyond. Several Tobians even found employment with the mission, while others received excellent educations in mission schools. Any Tobian in Eang trying to deal with sickness, personal or family difficulties, or just the complexity of life in Koror could always count on the mission for a sympathetic hearing and the offer of help and advice. Thus, when Tobians talked about the virtues of their new religion, they stressed two things: the power of Catholic ritual to suppress ghosts on their home island and the compassion of the priests.

Conclusion

I have focused here on the public dimension of Tobian religion, rather than on the internal, private worlds of the Tobians, primarily because religion traditionally had little to do with such internal worlds on Tobi. For Tobians, issues of being and becoming, of self-maintenance and self-transformation (Goodenough 1988) were dealt with through interpersonal relations rather than through religion (and as far as I could tell, always had been). Thus, Tobian society was sharply distinguished from the much more familiar cultural pattern in which such issues are dealt with through religions—institutions organized around conceptions of the supernatural.¹²

Tobians have never been mere passive objects of change. They have always responded actively and energetically to their gradual and not so gradual entanglements in the world beyond their island—as their ancestors had responded to the challenge of creating a self-sustaining adaptation to the less-than-bountiful Tobian ecosystem. That original and successful adaptation had been thrown out of order by the impact of the various colonial powers. The Tobians of the 1930s adopted Catholicism and began to use it to deal with the acute crisis in which they found

themselves. It provided them with a new set of rituals and a new means for relating to the supernatural—both of which they saw as essential and both of which had been lacking. In adopting (and adapting) Catholicism, they enshrined solutions to difficult aspects of the 1920s crisis within their new religion. Unfortunately, much later, when those solutions themselves became the source of new difficulties, they had become sacred and that sacrosanct nature rendered them impervious to profane arguments for their modification. In other words, the cultural maneuver of the 1930s, in which Catholicism was appropriated by the Tobians as a means of escape from an acute social contradiction, contained its own hidden contradictions, which only became apparent much later.

One can think of Tobian religion as acting like an outrigger on a canoe—a necessary balancing weight lashed securely but flexibly to Tobian society. In the ancient past, religion acted as a balance against the twin dangers of overexploitation of resources and the disruption of interpersonal cooperation. Catholicism was appropriated and crafted into a distinctly Tobian phenomenon at a time when overexploitation was no longer a threat to social equilibrium, but the danger of the loss of interpersonal cooperation remained. Just as in pre-Christian times, cooperation was threatened by the hostility reflected in those evil ghosts whose suppression and control was managed through the technology of ritual. The need to maintain checks on resource utilization was replaced by the imperative to deal creatively and positively with rapid economic, political, and social change.

Tobians used Catholicism for social balance with mixed results. In the area of marriage, the new religion created a difficult situation. In the equally critical situation in Eang, however, where it was necessary to create and maintain a viable way of life vis-à-vis people from other societies, Catholicism was highly successful.

As any Micronesian sailor can testify, changing outriggers in mid-course is no easy task. And having to refashion the new one at the same time that you are lashing it into place creates an even more precarious situation. The Tobians successfully replaced their ancient religion with Catholicism. The fact that this produced negative as well as positive consequences is, in the end, less remarkable than the fact that they managed to do it at all.

NOTES

eral faculty development grants from George Mason University. Between 1967 and 1973, a total of two and a half years was spent with the Tobians: six months in Eang and the rest on Tobi. In 1990 I spent four months with the Tobians living in Koror, studying their adaptation to life in that rapidly changing port town, and in 1993 I made yet another, shorter visit. Other data have been collected from various museums and archives. Final changes in the manuscript were made while I was in residence in the Program on Cultural Studies at the East-West Center, Honolulu, with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities and George Mason University.

Even though it is possible that several of them will object to some statements I make here, I am happy to acknowledge, as always, the cooperation and assistance of the people of Tobi, by now extending over several generations. K. Avruch, B. Black, G. White, and an anonymous reviewer of this manuscript provided useful criticism and insights. I want to particularly thank Father Francis Hezel, S.J., who generously provided copies of documents that he discovered in the course of his own research, as well as a close and very thoughtful critique of an earlier draft of this article. That critique and those documents significantly deepened my understanding of certain crucial features of the story I tell here. My interpretation of that story remains my own, as does the responsibility for any errors it contains.

One final point: In the process of arriving at a new constitutional arrangement within which to organize their affairs, the people referred to here as Tobians renamed their island (or at least the Palauan state government centered on it) *Hatohobei*, just as the word *Palau* was changed in the creation of the new entity called the Republic of Belau. As for that larger entity, the usage that seems to be emerging among Tobians is to keep the earlier form when using English and to use the new one when writing or speaking in the local language. I follow that usage here.

1. The reader interested in learning about the contemporary Palauan scene, dominated as it is by protracted status negotiations with the American government and related constitutional struggles, could start with Aldridge and Myers (1990), Black and Avruch (1993), Kluge (1991), Leibowitz (n.d.), Rabbitt-Roff (1991), and Wood (1991).

2. Oliver provides a description of many prewar societies in the colonial Pacific to which the adjective neotraditional, as I have defined it here, could be usefully applied (1989:87–251). I specify the term in this manner to avoid muddying waters already clouded by its occasional appearance in the discourse around *kastom* in Melanesia, where it occasionally calls up a self-conscious retraditionalizing of postcolonial, indeed postmodern, societies; see, for example, Keesing 1982:298. But even here, the more common use of the term seems much closer to the usage I am employing (Babadzan 1988:203; Howard 1983:179). If a genealogy of this term is required, one could begin by noting that Howard grounds his definition of the term in Hooper's 1982 work and then go on to an inspection of the term as it appears in a variety of sources, for example, Macnaught (1982) or, working backwards in time and out toward the margins of Oceania, Willner (1966). But compare with Thomas who appears to move back and forth between the two usages (1992).

3. The reasons leading me to think that Tobi probably did not form part of any regular system of precontact interisland exchange are set out in Black 1977:91, n. 15. But see Hunter-Anderson 1992 for a report of what seem to be Palauan pottery sherds from an early time period.

4. See Bellwood (1978), Terrell (1986), and Irwin (1992, especially pp. 117–132) for recent ideas on Pacific prehistory. Hezel (1983) is useful for the early contact period in the

Carolines. It should be noted that Palauan culture seems to have its immediate origins south and west in Island Asia and not, like Tobi, in the Trukic culture area to the east. Finally, mention should be made of Tobian narratives that refer to occasional voyages to New Guinea and more regular trips to the uninhabited atoll on Helen Reef, forty miles east.

5. Eilers (1936) contains most of the available material on ancient Tobian religion. Black (1978) also discusses this topic. Alkire (1977) gives a good general introduction to Micronesian culture. The earliest substantial accounts of Tobi date from the captivity of a group of New England whalers on the island from 1832 to 1834. See especially Holden ([1836] 1979), Bernard (1980), and Browning (1885). All three sources contain valuable material on the pre-Christian religious life of Tobi.

6. Oral histories from both Tobi and Fais (approximately 775 miles to the northeast) raise the strong possibility that this woman was from Fais. Donald Rubinstein, who has carried out ethnographic research on Fais, has recorded a genealogy in which a woman appears with a name very similar to the name of the woman Tobians claim first found their island and from whom they claim descent (pers. com., 1993). In that genealogy she is said to have left Fais on a voyage from which she never returned. One version of the Tobi myth also has her (if she is the same person) departing from Fais.

7. Sources differ on whether nonchiefly spirit mediums were participants in this class of events. All are quite clear, though, that the chief controlled the ritual and provided the interpretation of the uncanny speech and noises produced by those possessed by the spirits in the canoe, whether himself or another medium.

8. Spiro (1952) contains a neo-Freudian functional analysis of such ghosts on the culturally related atoll of Ifaluk that has become a classic. Black (1985) adds to that analysis a focus on the Tobian metaphorical use of the concept of ghost.

9. The contested nature of Version I was certainly pointed out in that earlier work, and where the probability of distortion was demonstrable, it was noted (Black 1978:325–328, 329–331, 333–336, 341–342). Since that earlier analysis, however, I have had access to Versions II and III, enabling me to see more clearly the selective workings of political memory. The three accounts are not in total disagreement, however. And among those things that they all agree on, two points stand out: the issue of ghosts was addressed by becoming Christian and marriage was reconstituted by the missionary (with difficulty).

10. Versions II and III disagree about the ground out of which that local initiative arose. Not surprisingly, in this respect the two Tobian versions are much closer to one another than to the missionary account. The subtext for both Tobian versions refers to local politics, especially the struggle over chiefly succession and the premissionary movement away from traditional religion. Father Elias's account has as its subtext, naturally enough, the miraculous workings of God's grace in the world. And, of course, one imagines that he was probably not privy to all the ins and outs of local Tobian political struggles.

Another strand of the story emerges from Lehmann 1908, which recounts the tribulations of a Sonsorol man who lived in Yap during the German administration (sometime prior to 1914, that is) for a number of years before moving to Tobi. This man had been baptized in Yap during a serious medical crisis. A man said to have lived on Yap with the Germans appears in many Tobian stories of the introduction of outside material culture to Tobi, for example, eating utensils and plates. Lehmann's man is named Mafateng; the person in the oral histories, Johannes (Hannes). This latter figure was not, at least in any of

the material I have collected, said to be either Sonsorolese or Christian. Nevertheless, the possibility exists that these were the same individual and thus raises the further possibility that Christian agitation on the island began a good number of years earlier than any of the other sources indicates.

11. It is interesting to observe that Version II claims a locally controlled disempowerment of ghosts; one of the early, pre-Elias Christians rendered the ghosts powerless by the liberal use of holy water that he had brought with him from Koror. Version I attributes the triumph to the missionary's actions.

12. In recent years this aspect, among many others, of the Tobian situation has changed through their increased involvement with Palauan and American cultures, the decay of their densely interconnected social system, and the growth of a cash-based economy. These factors have served to intensify the exposure of the lone self, to make self-preoccupation and introspection more prevalent, and to raise questions of self-worth and meaning. The whole character of ghost encounters, for example, has begun to shift in recent years into a much more individualized and often "romantic" mode.

Recent changes in Tobian experience, all of which indicate a shift into a heightened concern with the disconnected self, mean that concepts such as sin, salvation, grace, and redemption will probably acquire greater and greater salience for Tobians over time as will the ritual and theology associated with them in religion. In another paper I consider these issues in more detail, paradoxically enough in the context of an attempt to understand the recent drastic decline in Tobian church attendance (Black n.d.).

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**THE DECISION TO LOTU:
NEW PERSPECTIVES FROM WHALING RECORDS ON
THE SOURCES AND SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY IN SAMOA**

Rhys Richards
Wellington, New Zealand

Whaling logbooks would seem an unlikely place to look for information about the spread of Christianity. However, a survey of Samoa's forgotten whaling history has revealed in passing that later missionary histories were in error on several points: Many later accounts overlooked that Christianity arrived at Samoa simultaneously from several separate sources, and they often greatly overemphasized the speed, scale, and completeness of the Samoans' adoption of Christianity. By adding to other contemporary accounts a new perspective obtained from whaling sources, it has become apparent that the Samoans had not been isolated from developments elsewhere in the South Pacific and that their "decision to *lotu*"—to pray to the new God—had a high indigenous content. Indeed, it now seems over a third of the Samoans had already decided to pray to the Christian God, rather than to the old ones, before the arrival of John Williams and the first foreign missionaries in 1830.

Moreover, although the conversions at the Samoas were extraordinarily rapid, they were far from universal. The whaling records show that while Apia was "Christian," pacified and safe for foreigners by about 1835, whalers visiting outer areas like Falealupo on Savai'i, Fangaloa on Upolu, and the Manu'a group still encountered un-Christian, unpacific, and decidedly unsafe incidents and bicultural conflicts as late as 1850.

Many histories have already been written, from missionary perspectives, about Pacific missions. With well-documented sources, these histories have tended to be comparatively easy options and have been tack-

led first. There is a need now, however, to adopt new processes and perspectives, including a determined effort to search out and use less-familiar sources, and to think out new ways to advance beyond one-sided foreign viewpoints. At this stage, a quantum change is called for to focus not solely on looking *in* “at the beach,” but to also look *out* “from the beach.” Developing new sources and new processes will be worth the additional labor if they reveal new insights and new, local ways of looking at old material.

Whaling logbooks and journals seem at first sight only distantly related to this task. They are seldom well written, and many have a preoccupation with navigation and weather that makes them indigestible reading. Nevertheless, these whaling journals and logbooks are some of the few contemporary sources with a viewpoint different from that of the missionaries and, when taken together, they sometimes provide new insights into the culture-contact period.

Missionary Perspectives

John Williams, the first missionary to visit Samoa, was surprisingly perceptive and realistic, but it is sometimes overlooked that he spent only five days at Samoa in July 1830 and three weeks in October and November 1832. Williams recognized that the mass conversions when the locals decided to *lotu*, while demonstrable and wholehearted, were not very deep, intellectually or culturally. In his book *Narrative of Missionary Enterprise in the South Seas*, Williams acknowledged, “Some thought that by their embracing Christianity, vessels would be induced to visit them. . . . Others thought that they would be preserved from the [inherent] malignity of their Gods, many hoped by adopting the new religion, to prolong their lives and a few valued it chiefly as a means to terminating their sanguinary and desolating wars.” Williams also quoted at length a “venerable chief” who listed enviously the clothes, axes, knives, and other material wealth of the foreigners and concluded, “the God who has given his white worshippers these valuable things must be wiser than our gods, for they have not given the like to us” (Williams 1838:570).

A strong case was made in 1978 by J. Pereira, a perceptive local scholar, that the Samoans saw Williams as the priestly facilitator of a new contractual (*feagaiga*) relationship with the new God, with whom a new contract or covenant (*fa'a-feagaiga*) was symbolized and bonded by a traditional exchange of gifts (Pereira 1978:16). The Samoans knew the foreigners understood the significance of reciprocal gift exchanges

because that was the way they had bartered in the whaling trade for a decade before Williams's arrival. High chief Malietoa's declaration that his people and the missionaries were henceforth "*aiga tasi*," one big family, certainly involved expectations of a sustained reciprocity of future familylike relations and obligations.

Curiously, it has long been recognized that the missionaries, and their merchant backers, saw "Christianity as the means of Civilisation" and civilization as synonymous with "commercial development" (Coates, Beecham, and Ellis 1837; see also Gunson 1978:171-174, 269-272; Howe 1984:111-114). But ironically, the importance to the Samoans of the materialistic, contractual, and trade aspects in their decision to *lotu* seems to have been almost overlooked. Evidently the Samoans' experience of a decade of trade with the foreign *papalagi* weighed heavily in their expectations when deliberately, after much public debate, and with scarcely any missionary prompting, they decided to *lotu* (Williams 1838:570).

After Williams, later missionary writers about Samoa were less than discerning. In support of the missions, and mission funding, they created new myths about what they saw as an astonishingly rapid, effective, and gratifying adoption of Christianity in Samoa. The historiography need not be reviewed here (see Thomas 1990; Meleisia 1987). Suffice to say that the miracle of religious conversion, which certainly did take place, was not as abrupt, unprecedented, and comprehensive as much missionary and later literature implied. Certainly it was quite wrong to suggest the Samoans were scarcely visited islands: So many whaling and trading vessels had visited by 1832 that many Samoans were already preparing to throw off their old gods and enter into a new, more material, and more lucrative contract with the new god and the new goods.

Early Foreign Visitors to Samoa

A very short survey of foreign visitors should begin with the foreign explorers. Neither Roggewien in 1722 nor Bougainville in 1768 recommended Samoa as a priority destination. The next explorer, La Perouse, lost twelve men in 1787, killed on Tutuila, and gave the Samoans a fearsome reputation and a very bad press (Linnekin 1991). The missionary George Turner conveyed a view that prevailed in Europe when he wrote that this massacre "branded the whole group for fifty years as a race of treacherous savages, whose shore ought not to be approached" (1861:4).

Samoa was not on the main trade routes that were opened up from 1788 onward by European and American fur traders and other merchant voyagers who took the "easternmost" route to China "south round Australia" (Richards 1986). There were, however, many foreign contacts with the Samoas well before the missionaries arrived in 1830. The first known foreign beachcomber, an Englishman, was reported at Manu'a in about 1806 by George Bass. It was said he had arrived there a few years earlier from Tonga (*Nautical Magazine* 1814).

The first influx of foreigners to the Samoas probably came soon after, with American traders who took sandalwood, "the firewood of the Gods," from Fiji to China from 1806 to 1812, from Hawaii from 1811, the Marquesas from 1814 to 1817, and Vanuatu from the 1820s (Ward 1968:180). Although no records have been found yet of such trading visits to Samoa, it is most unlikely that these dynamic traders, who scoured the Pacific so thoroughly, did not examine the Samoas minutely too during the first two decades of the nineteenth century. A journal survives from Captain Benjamin Vanderford of Salem who called at Manu'a in 1822 with Fijian sandalwood and at Tutuila and Manu'a in 1827 with a cargo of Fijian *bêche-de-mer* bound for Manila and China (Vanderford 1821–1823; Driver 1826–1829). Two similarly informative journals survive for the trader *Emerald*, also of Salem, which called at "Powloo" (Upolu) as late as June 1835 seeking turtle shell, which by then was scarce and very highly priced at one musket for every good shell (Richards 1992:44–50).

The first whalers, halfway round the world from home, were always in need of clean water, fresh fruit, and vegetables, so many traded at the islands. An account of such a trading visit to obtain provisions at Samoa early in 1823 survives in an unsigned manuscript in the Mitchell Library in Sydney (Elyard n.d.; see also Gilson 1970:67). In this report the unnamed writer recorded that when the crew members of this unnamed whaleship called at Manu'a on 2 February 1823, they lost "a fine whaleboat, harpoons and lances" in the surf, and when on shore, the locals tried to kidnap them. "Having three Otaheitans on board, I hoped by their means to be able to converse with the people but in this was disappointed as they did not seem to understand much better than ourselves. I have no doubt that their language is nearly the same as [that they had recently encountered] at the Friendly Islands." The visitors traded at all the main Samoan islands, receiving pigs, yams, fruit, cloth, nets, and birds in exchange for hoop iron, knives, empty bottles, and cotton cloth. At Upolu, the crew counted 240 canoes visiting their ship, and the writer noted that

the curiosity of these people was excessive, which together with their not speaking a word of English, inclines me to believe they have been seldom visited, though no doubt small vessels from New South Wales have been trading here for sennit, as all the canoes that came for the purpose of trade, brought more or less of that article. I entirely failed in my principal object of obtaining at these islands a supply of yams, not being able to procure more than a dozen or two. . . . Though had I continued to cruise in that neighbourhood, I could have made these islands a place of resort for refreshments and have gone on shore safely when I pleased. (Elyard n.d.:5)

By 1823 many whaleships had visited Tonga and Tahiti. Despite extensive searching, the whaleship mentioned in the Elyard manuscript as at Samoa early in 1823 has not been further identified. However, among several possibilities, this vessel could have been the *John Bull* of London, which called at Sydney in mid-April 1823, last from the Society and Friendly Islands (Cumpston 1964:141).

The first American whaler identified at Samoa, and at Tokelau as well, was Captain Richard Macy in the *Maro* of Nantucket in early 1824 (Richards 1992:20). On her previous voyage, the *Maro* had pioneered the new whaling grounds south of Japan, which prompted a major whaling bonanza with the dispatch of more than thirty American and six British whaleships there in 1822 alone. It soon became common for whaling captains to alternate cruises "on Japan" with cruises "on the Line" (i.e., the equator), from which grounds the Samoas would have proved a relatively handy source of cheap provisions. In 1825 Captain Macy reported that refreshments and an abundance of hogs could be obtained from the natives at Samoa who had "a passionate fondness for large blue beads" (Reynolds 1836:217).

A journal kept on board the London whaleship *Phoenix* recorded another visit to Samoa for provisions in August 1824. Moreover, while editing this journal for publication, Gunson noted that contrary to suggestions that the Samoas had scarcely been visited, Kotzebue's account of trading at several locations in 1824 confirms that the Samoans were already well accustomed to foreign trading by then. At Manono, Kotzebue met a chief, probably a Tongan, who spoke a few words of English and carried a silk parasol and a silver dollar he had obtained from a foreign captain at Tonga (Kotzebue [1830] 1967:278–280; see also Gunson 1990b:7–12; Gunson 1990a:180). Notably, not all the visits by whalers were short or isolated: A journal kept on the *Independence* of Nan-

tucket recorded that during a single voyage, between cruises on the Japan grounds, this ship visited Samoa in 1826, 1827, and 1828, and met three other whaleships there (Richards 1992:21–24).

The first visits to Samoa by John Williams, the first foreign missionary, did not take place until 1830 and 1832. A close examination of his journal reveals mention of a surprising number of foreigners there before him: several convicts from New South Wales in 1828; more convicts from Moreton Bay in 1832; John Stevens and other deserters from the London whaleship *Oldham* in 1832; John Wright and eleven other Englishmen living on Manono; a young English lad living at Manu'a; a "William Gray" who had been living on Tutuila since 1829, plus others there (Moyle 1984:69, 101, 104–105, 108–110, 114, 139–140, 157, 180, 185–186, 217–218, 232, 240; Richards 1992:25–37). Supporting evidence can be found separately for most of these men in whaling and other records, and for the suggestion that by 1832 many beachcombers from Wallis Island, Tonga, and elsewhere were converging on Samoa, which had rapidly developed a most favorable reputation among run-aways and deserters.

Judging all these indications together, it seems probable at least twenty or thirty foreigners were resident at the Samoas before Williams's first visit. Since the fragmentary records that remain identify twenty-five vessels at Samoa before 1832 and many more whaleships cruising on the equator and at Tonga (that is, both south and north of Samoa), it seems likely several dozen more had traded there before the first foreign missionaries arrived.

First Christian Beliefs from Tahiti and Tonga

In fact, Christianity was already moving towards Samoa from several sources well ahead of Williams. Later missionary accounts celebrating a spontaneous adoption of Christianity at Samoa exhibited a blinkered perception, not shared by contemporary Samoans, when they ignored that by 1830 Tahiti, Fiji, Tonga, New Zealand, and Hawaii had all experienced Christian visitors for some decades and that foreign trade was well developed with those islands. Captain Samuel Henry, son of the pioneer London Missionary Society (LMS) missionary at Tahiti, had begun interisland trading from Tahiti to New Zealand and elsewhere in 1820. He seems to have visited Samoa several times, and he later took as crewmen a prominent Samoan chief, Teoneula, and Sio Vili, who was also known as Joe Gimlet. These two Samoans went south to Tonga where the Wesleyan mission was well established, then spent time at

Tahiti in about 1827 not only learning Tahitian but also witnessing both the LMS "*lotu taiti*" (Tahitian Christianity) and the local Mamaia religious movement developing there. Sio Vili also visited Sydney, probably with Captain Henry in the *Snapper* during 1828, and he apparently spent some time on a sperm whaler before returning home to Samoa in 1829 (Freeman 1959:187).

Early in 1830, several months before Williams's first visit, Sio Vili became a visionary and a prophet. He successfully launched a new indigenous religion that was a selective synthesis of Christian beliefs and traditional Samoan customs and practices, combined with cargo-cult expectations of material wealth arriving from overseas. This "*lotu Sio Vili*" gained strong support throughout Upolu, on Savai'i, and even on Tutuila. At its height, by one estimate, the group included between five and six thousand members, or about one-fifth of the population, including high chief Mata'afa. As Freeman noted, it continued in strong opposition to the LMS Christians for a generation (1959:198).

By 1830 Samoans who knew of other islands must have been expecting the new foreign religion to arrive soon. A further strong influence came from Tonga—the "*lotu toga*" (Tongan Christianity) from the Wesleyan mission began there in 1822. Political contacts between Samoa and Tonga were then strong, with dynastic intermarriage, several Tongan high chiefs living in Samoa, and quite frequent interisland voyaging. Williams, for example, reported seven Tongan canoes trading for fine mats just before his first visit (Moyle 1984:82). Before 1830, moreover, a number of leading Samoans had begun to identify themselves with *lotu toga*, some journeying to Tonga to learn more of the new religion. Mosese Nusiitonga is said to have returned home to Samoa in 1829 to spread the *lotu toga*; and that year another Samoan, Saiva'a-ai, visited Tonga and on his return home persuaded two villages in Savai'i to *lotu* (Pereira 1978:32; Gunson 1990a:182).

John Williams acknowledged freely that the great welcome accorded his arrival at Sapa'alii in July 1830 was greatly facilitated by Fauea, a Samoan chief who returned home on board the *va'a lotu* (literally, prayer ship) with Williams after living ten years in Fiji and Tonga. Similarly helpful soon after was the return from Tonga of Salata, a daughter of Matetau of Manono and a wife of the "king" of Ha'apai. She traveled home in a canoe with 150 Tongan Christians and the Samoan orator Mafua, whose followers taught Samoans to read soon after Williams's first short visit (Moyle 1984:177). The strength of this *lotu toga* group is evident from Turner's estimate that in 1836 it numbered at least two thousand followers in sixty-eight villages (Pereira 1978:32; Gunson

1990a:184). Predictably, there was soon intense competition between the followers of *lotu toga* and *lotu taiti*, largely along old political lines and later fueled by LMS rivalries with the Wesleyans.

At Leone on Tutuila in October 1832, Williams visited several villages where, on advice from Savai'i, the people had already built chapels and begun keeping the Sabbath. There he was told of a devout pastor, Salima, who had been diligently involved in good works in several villages and already had a following of nearly three hundred. Salima could read a Tahitian Bible and had translated part of the Anglican prayerbook into Samoan and taught his converts to repeat it (Murray 1876:33–34; Moyle 1984:104). Earlier Salima, or another self-appointed local pastor there, had “written to all the white men on the Islands [asking them] to set the people a better example and teach them religion” (Moyle 1984:111). Salima was also called Norval, as were several whaleships.

Christian Beliefs from Foreigners Present before 1830

But even more striking was that by 1830 several Samoan communities eager to *lotu* had kidnaped or adopted stray European beachcombers and whaleship deserters, begging them to pass on what scraps they knew of the new religion. Several sects led by sailors had developed by 1830, with “a great many white people about the islands turning the people [to] religion.” Turner described two such “sailor sects,” one run by an Englishman and another by a Portuguese, both clearly former whalers, which included periodic feastings that were welcome to Samoans and distantly related to holy communion (Turner 1861:10–12). Most of these “*lotu* sailor” groups were small, localized, and easily incorporated into the later mission. At least two had several hundred Samoan converts, who no doubt considered they had already taken their decision to *lotu* or were waiting only for the arrival of a properly ordained missionary as a qualified facilitator with a correct, direct line to the new God.

Williams judged these proponents of “*lotu* sailor” as “great obstacles to missionary work” and wrote scathingly that the Samoans “were so anxious for someone to conduct their [new] religious services, they made collections of food, mats etc to runaway sailors, some of whom read portions of English Scriptures or prayer book; but others were vile enough to sing infamous songs in English” and to assure their enthusiastic but gullible hosts that “this was worship acceptable to God” (Williams 1838:572).

Though several more accounts exist of runaway seamen teaching

about the new religion, none match the vividness of Williams's own notes in his journal, which he did not publish in full, about his rebuking two Cockney former whalers at Aleipata in 1832 for saying prayers, ministering to the sick, holding Sunday gatherings, and "baptising" two or three hundred converts, which they called "turning the people [to] religion." About this incident Williams wrote, "I said to Jerry, suppose you were to go to England just naked as you are now, with your navel tattooed and the lower parts of your tattooed belly shewing as it is now, with nothing in the world but a hat and an old pair of trousers on, and go in to a large Church or Chapel and stand up there to baptise people. What would the people think of that?" Cockney Jerry, thoroughly intimidated by his lack of such essential trappings of religion as the right clothes, replied humbly, "I see I am wrong, sir, and I'll not baptise any more" (Moyle 1984:114).

Clearly, despite the contrary impression conveyed by later missionaries, Samoa was by no means unaccustomed to foreign visitors or unaware of Christianity by 1830. Indeed, through contacts with whalers and traders and with Christians in neighboring islands, Samoa seems to have been well on the way to adopting several forms of Christianity even if Williams and the other ordained foreign missionaries had not arrived when they did. The decision to *lotu* by so many Samoans almost immediately after John Williams arrived certainly looked miraculous to missionaries used to very slow progress elsewhere, but at least a third, and perhaps 40 percent, of Samoa's population had become followers of some variant form of *lotu* before they joined Williams's orthodox LMS! Consequently, the decision to *lotu* may well have been judged by the Samoan participants themselves as an indigenous, "home-based" decision that, by then, was inevitable with or without Williams! No doubt, how one saw the miracle of rapid conversion depended on one's perspective—whether seen from *on* the beach or from *off* the shore.

That so much more detail is known about the impact of Williams than of Sio Vili and the other premissionary "native teachers," or of the effects of beachcombers like tattooed Cockney Jerry, is because Williams was the only one to write down his experiences and because his successors chose to emphasize selectively his important part in the "miraculous" conversion of Samoan heathens to Christians virtually overnight. The decision to question seriously the later missionaries' interpretations has been prompted not solely by the contents of the whaling journals and logbooks but from also looking at familiar information in a new light, with a new perspective prompted by the whaling sources.

The Uneven Spread of Christianity

The whaling logbooks and journals also show that the years immediately following the various decisions to *lotu* were far from calm and Christian. Visiting whalers who ignored local taboos were still killed; many others were still enticed ashore, captured, and ransomed for muskets that were then used not only in renewed tribal wars but also for several attacks on whaleships.

In July 1834 at Falealupo on northwest Savai'i, when crew from the American whaler *William Penn* persisted in ignoring traditional local taboos, a fight developed; the crews of two whale boats were captured and one American and one Hawaiian killed. The survivors, except for two or three Hawaiians, were ransomed a few months later. One contemporary reflected the limited extent of trust and solid Christian values on both sides when he judged that this disaster was the captain's fault for not taking the standard precaution of holding some locals hostage on board whenever crewmen went ashore (*New Bedford Mercury*, 22 May 1835).

In January 1834 the logbook of the *Bowditch* of Bristol, Rhode Island, recorded ruefully the ransoming of three men held on shore at Manu'a: "It is the custom here for the native women to decoy the men away from the boats, and to their beds, and not to give them up again without muskets." A journal keeper on the *Benjamin Rush* of Warren, Rhode Island, at Tutuila in May 1835 wrote only, "Trading with the natives one musket two bayonets for 15 hogs. A Bad time. Getting ready to start after the spouting fish again." Another then at Apia noted "clubs and spears are fast giving way to muskets and powder" (quoted in Richards 1992:41, 43). At Tutuila in July 1835, an English beachcomber privy to some local, very un-Christian habits warned the crew of the London whaler *Vigilant* just in time to save their vessel from being captured (*Vigilant* 1831-1835). The journal kept on the *Nassau* of New Bedford in August 1835 recorded a common event, the ransoming of a deserter for a musket (but is more of note for unusual entries for a distant love, like "Oh my Rachael, almost two months and no whales!" [Richards 1992:51]). Clearly the decision to *lotu* had not reduced the traditional habits of war.

The whaling records show clearly that long after the initial decision to *lotu*, the safety of foreigners varied from place to place. As late as 1836, in "a beautiful bay on Upolu," only a last-minute, providential gust of wind saved the American whaler *Charles Carroll* from being cut off and destroyed by a well-planned and vigorously executed attack mounted from a fleet of canoes (Calkin 1953:60).

From early on, Apia harbor became the safest port. In 1831 an English captain had had to take an armed guard ashore at Apia as "protection" against the "treacherous" Samoans (Lafond de Lurcy 1845: 138). But by 1835 even normally cautious captains were allowing their crews to spend brief periods on liberty on shore. This increasing confidence and security around Apia followed in part from the presence of local Christians there from 1832 and foreign missionaries from June 1836. By the 1840s, when five or more whaleships might lie in Apia harbor at any one time, as many as 150 whalers might be rostered for shore leave. Whaling generally alternated short sprints of very hard work with long spells of intense boredom. Tight discipline was essential on board to forestall discontent and mutiny, so despite the risks most captains found it better to allow their jaded crews short stints of liberty ashore in safe ports.

One of the major attractions of Apia harbor was the presence of resident foreigners—former whalers at first but later missionaries and traders as well—who could usually advise visitors who among the Samoans held the power on shore and who could or could not honor promises to provide provisions. The trade was erratic and unpredictable, and regulating it proved beneficial to all parties. The first port treaty was concluded at Apia in 1838 by Captain Drinkwater Bethune in HMS *Conway*. Soon after, the United States Exploring Expedition under Commodore Charles Wilkes called at Samoa largely, it seems, to further protect American commercial interests and "to support the American whalefleet." This commercial rather than scientific role was soon apparent when Wilkes proposed sixteen "Commercial Regulations." After full consideration by "the principal chiefs of the Samoan Group of Islands," these regulations were jointly signed into effect on 5 November 1839 by the local chiefs, Commodore Wilkes, and the newly appointed consuls for both the United States and Britain (Wilkes 1845, 2:93–94, 102–106, 428–430; see also Richards 1992:71, 104–106, 157).

Thereafter, strong discipline was exerted at Apia by the chiefly *matai*, the missionaries, and the consuls. Even so, serious incidents persisted, particularly in other districts. In October 1839 Commodore Wilkes sentenced to exile overseas a Samoan who had murdered a New Bedford whaler, a severe punishment the Samoans thought much worse than death! Later, Commodore Wilkes volunteered to implement the sanctions envisaged in the commercial treaty, and on the prompting of Malietoa and the chiefs at Apia, the Americans exacted savage retribution on common enemies. First the Americans attacked Satupa'itea village on Savai'i, trying to capture the chief Opotuno, who was accused of several murders and of "threatening" American whalers. Although

all of Opotuno's personal property was burned, three attacks fell short of their goal as the chief simply took to hiding in the mountains when warships visited (Wilkes 1845, 2:88–93, 101–102).

In July 1840 Tagi, a minor chief of Saluafata, on Upolu, murdered Gideon Smith, an American whaler living ashore. Sworn evidence indicated Smith had failed to honor certain promises of gifts, including some to the relatives of Tagi, in compensation for treating a young woman very badly. Nevertheless, the consuls demanded the murderer be delivered to them for trial. In the circumstances, Tagi's kin naturally refused. When the American Exploring Expedition ships returned in February 1841, as delayed retaliation their crews shelled, attacked, and burned three villages—Saluafata, Fusi, and Salelesi—inflicting a disproportionate loss of life (Wilkes 1845, 3:382–383, 434–438; 5:25–26, 31–32).

The pacification, or perhaps intimidation, of the Samoans that had not been completed by the decision to *lotu* was thus enforced by the heavy-handed, one-sided warfare of these American “explorers, scientists and sailors” (Richards 1992:77–130). Thereafter, visits by men-o'-war were quite numerous and were sufficient to establish the consuls and support their assumed extraterritorial powers over and above local law whenever foreigners were involved (Gilson 1970:198–221).

Given the obvious attractions of Samoa and the Samoans, and the squalor and boredom inevitable on a whaleship, desertions were common. At first whaling captains found recovering these runaways troublesome, but before long at Apia harbor the locals could be paid to hunt down deserters and return those they did not like. Most American crewmen were “greenhands,” that is, unemployed farm boys out for a “good time,” ready for illicit alcohol if any could be found, but on the whole they were looking for fairly innocent fun rather than hell bent upon booze, women, and brawling. There was some of that of course, but at Apia the chiefly *matai*, the foreign consuls, and the missionaries generally saw to it that by one means or another the excesses of the visiting whalers were kept within strict limits that minimized the whalers' social impact on the local community. Thus good law and order prevailed around Apia harbor for more than a decade until the discipline the *matai* could exert declined sharply during the troubled years of the 1850s.

Even so, whaling and other sources show lawlessness still prevailed in outer areas. William Diaper was kidnaped at Manu'a in 1840. Deserters outside Apia were often not returned and not ransomed. As late as 1855, the people of Fangaloa sought to entice a vessel to be wrecked on shore

there. And five years after that, the mission newspaper reported that several survivors of a distant shipwreck who had reached Savai'i by raft had been treated barbarously, and acknowledged specifically that even at that late date not all villages had abandoned heathenism (Richards 1992:72-76, 175, 186). If most Samoans held steadfastly to the earlier decision to *lotu*, the evidence from the whalers certainly cautions against assuming the conversion was universal.

Conclusion

To conclude, until whaling declined after 1850, it was the whalers, rather than traders, who brought most foreign goods, techniques, and customs to Samoa. In material terms, it was the whalers who fulfilled the missionaries' promises, and Samoans' expectations, that "civilization" would bring material benefits too. These trade relations worked well for more than a decade. Ironically, though, in attracting both British and American warships to follow them to protect their whalefleets and their national commercial interests, the whalers also did Samoans a disservice: that of exposing them to Great Power rivalries and to the chain of events that led to the division of Old Samoa into the two Samoas that persist today.

The whalers' early and substantial contribution to Samoa certainly deserves to be better known. A close study of the surviving contemporary whaling records has given new insights, including into what seemed at first only a very peripherally related subject, the Samoans' decision to *lotu*. If enough such new insights can be found, then perhaps the writing of balanced, dual-perspective mission histories can begin a new phase.

NOTE

Most of the research for this article was conducted while I lived in Western Samoa from 1986 to 1988, but a short period was spent in 1987 as Scholar in Residence at the Kendall Whaling Museum, Sharon, Massachusetts, and as a guest speaker at the Munson Institute at Mystic Seaport Museum, Mystic, Connecticut. I am particularly grateful to these and to other whaling museums and libraries for their kind permission to quote from their materials in my recent book, *Samoa's Forgotten Whaling Heritage*. The text was completed and typeset in Apia in 1988, but printing was delayed by Cyclone Ofa and Cyclone Val and was not completed, in New Zealand, until November 1992. A short version of this article, the result of a reexamination of the sources used during that protracted gestation period, was presented at the IX Pacific History Conference in Christchurch in December 1992.

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“A FOREIGN FLOWER”? DEMOCRACY IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC

Peter Larmour
University of Tasmania

Moves towards democracy took place in three South Pacific countries in the early 1990s: Fiji held its first elections since the military coups in 1987; Western Samoa extended the franchise from chiefly heads of household (*matai*) to all adults (Tagaloa 1992:131); and a pro-democracy movement was formed in Tonga (Helu 1992:145–149). These moves were resisted. Some people opposed democracy on principle. A leader of Fiji's indigenous nationalist Taukei movement, for example, referred to democracy as “that crazy demon” (quoted in Sutherland 1992:192). Others complained about the way it was introduced or, like the king of Tonga, warned of its consequences “citing the histories of Spain, Germany, and Russia as examples of ruthless tyrannies that had democratic origins, and warning of the dangers of coups d'état” (Campbell 1992a:92).

Persistent arguments, for and against, concerned the social and economic conditions for democracy. A *Fiji Times* editorial asked if democracy was a “foreign flower” unable to take root in South Pacific soil (3 September 1992). That phrase captures two themes in debates about democracy in the region: The first is the extent to which democracy is something introduced from outside rather than grown from within, and the second is the extent to which democracy is possible or desirable in certain economic and social circumstances but not in others.

This article tries to answer the first of these questions by making comparisons among the twenty-two island states and territories of the South Pacific. Though the evidence is patchy, the number and variety of polit-

ical systems in the South Pacific provides opportunities to use comparison as a control on generalizations about democracy derived from only one country, or from elsewhere.¹

I first consider what democracy means, in particular the relevance of republican and nationalist conceptions of democracy, the distinction between direct and representative democracy, and the vexed relationship between liberalism, democracy, and indigenous cultural traditions. Second, I compare the South Pacific countries in terms of the attributes of representative democracy: responsible executive, universal suffrage, and freedom of speech. Third, I use these data to consider some hypotheses from other studies of the relationship between democracy and development, particularly the role of the middle or working classes in proposing it and the role of chiefs and plantation owners in resisting it.

What Is Democracy?

Comparison requires conceptualization—stepping back and viewing particular institutions as cases of something more abstract.² “Democracy” is a contested concept. Most regimes claim to be in some way “democratic” and the concept may be overstretched to fit quite different systems of government (Sartori 1991:249). The meaning of concepts depends partly on their relationship to the world outside and partly on their relationship to other concepts. At least five issues seem to be at stake in current debates about democracy in the region and are discussed further below:

1. The relevance of monarchical and nationalist conceptions of democracy
2. The conflict between egalitarian principles and hierarchical indigenous traditions
3. A conflict between representative and direct democracy
4. The feasibility of democracy in multiethnic societies
5. The conflict between liberalism and indigenous culture

Republican and Nationalist Conceptions

Republican conceptions of democracy contrast it with monarchy and aristocracy. Nationalist conceptions contrast democracy with foreign rule. In his *Models of Democracy*, David Held offers a republican definition of democracy as “a form of government in which, in contradistinction to monarchies and aristocracies, the people rule” (1987:2).

Held raises questions of definition (which people, ruling what, and within what limits?) and of application (in what circumstances is democracy possible?). In the South Pacific, the questions of definition were considered in debates that led to the adoption of constitutions when islands became independent or entered into free association with former colonial powers (Ghai 1983, 1988a, 1988b). Questions of application were sometimes regarded as vaguely demeaning of Pacific Islanders, but in any case tended to be set aside in the urgent business of drawing up a constitution. They were raised again when, as in Fiji, the constitutional arrangements broke down.

In Fiji, Tonga, and Western Samoa—whose democratization introduced this essay—the republican conception of democracy makes sense. The king, the nobles, and their opponents contrast democracy with monarchy or aristocracy. The Tongan social critic, Helu, comfortably discusses Tongan politics in terms of classical and modern European republicanism (1992), while a conservative Western Samoan writer warns of the “threat of monarchy” (Tagaloa 1992:124). Elsewhere, democracy is more often contrasted with colonial rule or the precontact forms of government, which ranged from egalitarian “stateless societies” to more-stratified systems of chieftaincy that sometimes became aristocracies and monarchies (Larmour 1992b). In Papua New Guinea and other parts of Melanesia, for example, colonial rule is often seen as having extinguished precontact forms of direct democracy that independence has only partly restored (Deklin 1992:36–39).

A nationalist conception might provide an alternative to the republican.³ It made sense in late-colonial-period Vanuatu, for example, where a mass-based political party (the Vanua‘aku Pati) opposed British and French colonial rule, and a general election was not held until just before independence. But colonial rule was also resisted by quite undemocratic movements. One of the strands in Western Samoa’s Mau movement in the 1920s, for instance, was the restoration of chiefly, rather than popular, authority against colonial paternalism (Meleisea 1987:126–128).

Colonial powers introduced forms of representative government, at times only to retreat in the face of them. There was also popular resistance to the forms of democracy proposed by late-colonial-period governments or adopted at independence. Indigenous resistance to the introduction of “multiracial” local government councils in Papua New Guinea in the late 1960s precipitated a violent and sustained threat to Australian rule in the territory (Downs 1980:424–437). Voters in the Marshall Islands and Palau resisted joining the Federated States of

Micronesia (Hanlon and Eperiam 1983:87–88). Postcolonial constitutional reviews have found popular resistance to human rights provisions, such as those guaranteeing freedom of movement.⁴

A nationalist conception of democracy also has difficulty making sense of votes against independence (or can only do so by dismissing voters against independence as nonindigenous or misled). Majorities of voters in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands have voted for closer integration with, rather than independence from, the United States (Ranney and Pennyman 1985). Majorities in the French territories have voted for continued rule by France. Supporters of independence in New Caledonia blame immigration, claiming that the will of the majority of the indigenous people has been opposed, outnumbered by a minority abetted by settlers and recent immigrants (Henningham 1992). The 1988 Matignon Accords between supporters of independence and the French government brought peace to the territory precisely by deferring another referendum on independence for ten years: Democracy seemed to be part of the problem, not part of the solution.

Egalitarian Democracy and Hierarchical Traditions

There is a common vocabulary of politics among Polynesian societies based, according to Kirch, on “genealogical rank, primogeniture, *mana*⁵ and *tapu*⁶” (1989:28). Chiefly traditions are often cited by those hostile to democratization in Fiji, Western Samoa, and Tonga. Conflicts between chiefly rule and democracy also occur in parts of Micronesia, such as the Marshall Islands and Federated States of Micronesia, and in those parts of Melanesia with chiefly traditions. There is a general revival, or reinvention, of chieftaincy in the region (White 1992).

However, traditions do not necessarily speak with one voice. Traditions of authority also produce traditions of resistance and justified rebellion, as in the famous Polynesian saying about chiefs who tended to “eat the powers of the government too much” (Sahlins, quoted in Kirch 1989:254). The attitudes of Fijian commoners to chieftaincy well express this ambivalent attitude: supporting chieftaincy but cynical about the actual practices of particular chiefs. Sitiveni Rabuka—the leader of the 1987 coups, loyal rebel, commoner leader of the chiefs’ party, and now prime minister—perfectly embodies this ambivalence. Traditions are thus “polysemic,” with multiple potential meanings.

Scott argues from his own research on peasants and a wide range of historical accounts of slavery that subordinated groups do not necessar-

ily accept the self-justifications of their rulers, but simply keep prudently quiet (1990:70–107). The historical record reflects what he calls the “public transcript” (for example, “our serfs love us”) (Scott 1990:45–46). Typically, however, neither side really believes it: Members of the dominant group are mindful of the need to preserve their prestige, solidarity, and means of repression. The subordinated (commoners, women, the colonized, etc.) play along, make subversive jokes, and dream of a “world turned upside down.” This world is partly glimpsed during carnivals and Mardi Gras, or (for instance) in the run-up to Fiji’s second coup, when the army escorted escaped prisoners through the streets of the capital to have tea with the governor-general (Scarr 1988:127).

Representative and Direct Democracy

The constitutions introduced at independence or as part of political-status negotiations with the United States were quite different from each other, but all were based on representative forms of government. As Held (1992) argues, representative democracy is an invention of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, only consolidated since the Second World War, and apparently triumphant since the collapse of communist-party forms of democracy in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Representative democracy is distinct from the participatory but socially exclusive forms of self-government celebrated in the Greek city-states, which disenfranchised women, foreigners, and slaves. Proponents argue that representation made democracy feasible for much-larger political systems while protecting citizens from the excesses of mob rule on the one hand and of state officials on the other (Held 1992:12–17).

The median population of a modern South Pacific state is about fifty thousand, roughly the citizen population of the Greek city-states that provide Western political theory with its images of participatory democracy. Precontact political systems were typically much smaller and in some cases as socially exclusive. Participatory democracy thus seems feasible on demographic grounds, and there are many examples of representative democracy conceding to participatory democracy in modern South Pacific constitutional systems. Turnout of voters and turnover of representatives is generally very high (Ghai 1988c:71). Traditions of village-level self-government persisted through colonial rule, often encouraged through the introduction of systems of local government that were then entrenched in the Melanesian constitutions at independence. Pressures to devolve power to local assemblies, towards more federal

arrangements, and to create new states within existing federations have persisted.

The international supervision of the process of decolonization also supported direct democracy. The United Nations encouraged referenda and public-education campaigns in which politicians and officials toured islands and villages. Series of referenda were held, particularly in the U.S. and French territories (but also in the British Gilbert and Ellice Islands). Committees toured hundreds of villages in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands to find out what kinds of constitution, land policy, or provincial government the people wanted (Papua New Guinea 1973, 1974; Solomon Islands 1976a, 1976b, 1979). Subsequent constitutional reviews have tended to follow the same pattern.

Democracy and Ethnic Divisions

Fiji's 1987 coups support Lane and Ersson's evidence of a negative correlation between ethnic diversity and democratic persistence (1990: 138). The politics of Fiji are constructed around deeply entrenched categories of "race," reinforced by the 1990 constitution that reserves certain executive positions for indigenous Fijians and insures an indigenous majority in Parliament, whatever the population. Politics in New Caledonia are similarly polarized, though without Fiji's formal constitutional entrenchments. Similar issues of ethnicity, authenticity, and immigration during the colonial period are arising in Guam.

More generally, throughout the region differential access to economic opportunities is often marked by ethnic difference, and each reinforces the other. For example, people living around colonial capitals like Tarawa, Port Moresby, or Honiara got early access to education and public service jobs but now face competition from migrants from other parts of the country. Their earlier privilege and current fears about its loss are often expressed in terms of ethnicity or of customary land rights defined in ethnic terms of descent from common ancestors. Tensions between the customary owners of the land on which Port Vila is built and migrants from other parts of the country contributed to a land rights demonstration and subsequent attempt by the president to sack the government in Vanuatu in 1988 (Larmour 1990). Part of Bougainville landowners' complaint against the Bougainville copper mine is its attraction for migrant workers from other parts of the country and overseas (Larmour 1992a). Fiji is thus an extreme case of a more pervasive phenomenon.

Liberalism and Indigenous Culture

From the Enlightenment's "noble savage" to the Air Niugini advertising slogan "Like Every Place You've Never Been," the South Pacific has been subject to what Said (1985) famously characterized as an "orientalising" process that simplifies, caricatures, and emphasizes the exotic.⁷ Keesing warns against the reification of Pacific cultures as fixed, unequivocal, and standing outside politics (1992:32-35). Theorists of the "invention of tradition" have shown that institutions claimed to be venerable are really quite recent or indeed products of colonial sponsorship.⁸ However, in spite of these welcome corrections, there remains a persistent modern tension between "culture" and "democracy" that needs explaining (Crocombe et al. 1992).

Saffu's pioneering survey of political attitudes in Papua New Guinea demonstrates some of the issues. He found that 39 percent of people did not regard casting their votes in elections as an individual matter, and most of these voted according to the recommendation of a community meeting, clan head, councillor, or church leader (Saffu 1989:21). To avoid "orientalising" we would need to ask, for comparison, how people in "the West" voted, and we might find differences within "the West": (say) that people voted like their parents or on the instructions of a party machine. Theorists of the invention of tradition would remind us that at least two of Saffu's institutional reference points are "introduced" (councillor, church leader) and might cast doubt on the traditional credentials of a community meeting and clan head. Nevertheless, some deliberately collective process seems to be going on that is at odds with the assumptions, at least, of liberal democracy.

Parekh (1992) suggests we might start looking for an explanation by distinguishing "liberalism" from "democracy." Though not specifically addressed to the South Pacific, his argument also suggests a way of drawing together the issues of tradition, ethnicity, and direct democracy discussed above.

Briefly, Parekh argues that in the modern history of the West, "liberalism preceded democracy by nearly two centuries and created a world to which the latter had to adjust" (1992:161). Liberalism involves a conception of the autonomous individual, able to stand outside a particular community and to create or reject institutions on the basis of calculations of self-interest. Individuals are conceptually prior to governments, and democracy is one way that individual liberty can be protected against governments. This conception, suggests Parekh, is quite differ-

ent from the assumptions underlying Athenian democracy, in which the community is conceptually prior to the individual and individual freedom lies in active participation in government, rather than in a private space protected from it. This is not to say that liberal democracy is defective, merely that its own history shows it is not necessarily universally valid.

Parekh goes on to suggest that liberalism may be of limited relevance in "cohesive polities with a strong sense of community and multicultural polities" (1992:169). In the first case (for example, certain Islamic societies), there may be a different conceptualization of the relationship between individuals and community. In the second case (for example, India), a plurality of ethnic, tribal, or religious communities may themselves be bearers of rights, with different laws governing the members of each. In rejecting the universalist claims of liberal democracy, Parekh is not arguing for complete relativism; instead he proposes the development of cross-cultural consensus about principles of good government that allow diverse, culturally specific interpretation while mobilizing domestic and international pressure against "grossly outrageous practices and customs" (1992:171).

Such a consensus may be hard to achieve, but Parekh's insistence that liberalism can be rejected without rejecting other forms of democracy goes some way to explain the tensions surrounding democracy in the South Pacific, particularly as his argument could apply equally to cohesive monocultures such as Kiribati, multicultural polities such as Fiji, and states such as Papua New Guinea that share characteristics of both. It allows for criticism of particular regimes on several grounds: that they are selectively interpreting tradition; that the societies they govern are not, in fact, the cohesive communities their rulers claim them to be, so they should allow for the rights of minority communities or general individual rights; and that, whatever values the community holds, these violate emerging international norms. All three arguments, for example, could be made against postcoup regimes in Fiji.

Representative Democracy in the South Pacific

Representative forms of democracy are fairly well established in the South Pacific, even in countries that are still colonies. All but two now have a system of universal adult suffrage (the exceptions having populations of only sixteen hundred and one hundred). Sixteen of the twenty-two have an executive responsible to a legislature within the jurisdiction rather than to a metropolitan capital. However, Tonga's executive is still

responsible to the king rather than parliament, and Fiji's inclusion within the above total is debatable: Its system of representation is ethnically biased, and the responsibility of the executive to the legislature is compromised by the reservation of key positions to one ethnic group. The media in most countries have a narrow geographical spread and tend to be dominated by the executive.

Table 1 compares twenty-two island members of the South Pacific Commission for indicators of the conventional attributes of representative democracy: an executive responsible to an elected legislature or directly elected, universal adult suffrage, and freedom of speech. The "Suffrage" column deals with the right to vote and shows when the franchise was extended to particular groups. However, the right to vote is not of much use if the legislature has no power over the executive. Colonial governments often created advisory councils and assemblies but remained responsible themselves to metropolitan ministers and parliaments. Even when territories became "self-governing," with local officials responsible to local electorates, the colonial governments retained responsibility for foreign affairs and defense. So the "Responsible Executive" column shows when the executive became fully responsible to a legislature in the jurisdiction or (through direct election of a president) to a local electorate.

Thus, the status of the executive links democracy with decolonization, and (with two exceptions) the date in that column is the date of independence or entry into free association. The exceptions are important. When the army seized power in Fiji in 1987, the executive was cut loose from the legislature (and officials went on to use the opportunity to implement potentially unpopular economic policies). Elections held under a new constitution in 1992 restored some accountability. Tonga has had a parliament since 1875, but the executive—the king and his ministers and governors—is not responsible to it, though reformers are trying to make the executive more accountable.

Divided responsibility between metropolitan and local legislatures and the direct election of members of the executive make the situation more complicated in the remaining French and U.S. colonies. Regulations governing the French "overseas territories" make a distinction between "state" functions (for which the high commissioner is responsible to Paris) and a more modest list of "territorial" functions, for which local officials are responsible to the Territorial Assembly. Voters in these territories also elect members to the National Assembly in Paris and vote for the French president (and even the European Parliament). A third tier of municipal government is responsible in different ways to both—

TABLE 1. Indicators of Representative Democracy

	Suffrage	Responsible Executive	Nongovernment Newspapers (1990s)	Nongovernment Radio & TV (1990s)
American Samoa	Universal 1957	1976	<i>Samoa News Observer</i>	TV
Cook Islands	Rarotonga universal 1893–1899 Universal 1957	1965	<i>Cook Islands News</i>	FM radio
Fed. States of Micronesia	Universal 1965 ^a	1986	<i>Joan King Report</i>	TV
Fiji	European men 1906 Indian men 1929 ^b Fijians 1963 Women 1963	1970–1987 (coups) Resumed 1992	<i>Fiji Times</i> <i>Daily Post</i> <i>Weekender</i>	FM radio
French Polynesia	Tahiti universal 1880–1903 ^c Universal 1953	Paris	<i>Les Nouvelles</i> <i>Tahiti Pacifique</i> <i>Depeche</i> <i>La Tribune</i> <i>L'Echo de Tahiti Nui</i>	FM radio (11 stations)
Guam	1899 attempt Universal 1931	1971	<i>Daily News</i>	Radio, KUAM TV
Kiribati	Universal 1967	1979	<i>Itoi</i>	No
Marshall Islands	Universal 1965 ^a	1986	<i>M.I. Journal</i>	Radio, TV

Nauru	Universal 1951	1968	Occasional	No
New Caledonia	European men pre-WW2	Paris	<i>Les Nouvelles</i>	Radio Djido
	European women postwar			Radio Rhythm Blue
	Melanesians 1951, ^d completed 1957			
Niue	Universal 1960	1974	No	TV
Northern Marianas	Universal 1965 ^a	1975	<i>Marianas News and Views</i>	TV
Palau	Universal 1965 ^a	1981	<i>Tia Belau</i>	WALU TV
Papua New Guinea	Europeans 1951	1975	<i>Times</i>	EMTV
	Universal 1964		<i>Post-Courier</i>	
			<i>The National Wantok</i>	
Pitcairn	(Direct democracy)	No	<i>Miscellany</i>	No
Solomon Islands	Universal 1967	1978	<i>Star Voice Toktok</i>	No
			No	No
	(Direct democracy)	No	<i>Times</i>	TV
Tokelau	Nobles 1875	King	<i>Tongan International</i>	
Tonga	Men 1875		<i>Kele'a</i>	
	Women 1960 ^e		<i>Matangi Tonga</i>	
			<i>Taumu'a Lelei</i>	
Tuvalu			<i>Ko'e Tohi Fanongonogo</i>	
	Universal 1967	1978	No	No
				(continued)

TABLE 1. Continued

	Suffrage	Responsible Executive	Nongovernment Newspapers (1990s)	Nongovernment Radio & TV (1990s)
Vanuatu	Universal 1975 ^f	1980	No	No
Wallis & Futuna	Universal 1961	Paris	No	No
Western Samoa	Europeans 1923 <i>Matai</i> 1948 ^g Universal 1991	1962	<i>Times Observer</i> <i>Samoa News</i>	No

Sources: Robie 1990 and (American Samoa) Sunia 1983:124; (Cook Islands) Gilson 1980:68, 90, 200–201; Pryor 1983:160; (Fed. States of Micronesia) Meller 1969; (Fiji) Lawson 1991:83–85, 135–144, 164–165; (French Polynesia) Newbury 1980:206–212; (Guam) Thompson 1947:68–79; (Kiribati) Van Trease 1980:3; (Marshall Islands) Meller 1969; (Nauru) Viviani 1970:105; (New Caledonia) Dornoy 1984:154; Henningham 1992:49; (Niue) Chapman 1976:16; (Northern Marianas, Palau) Meller 1969; (Papua New Guinea) Downs 1980:94–95, 306–310; (Solomon Islands) Seamala 1983:2–8; (Tokelau) Geise and Perez 1983; (Tonga) Campbell 1992b:186; (Tuvalu) Van Trease 1980:3; (Vanuatu, Wallis & Futuna) Henningham 1992:36–39, 180; (Western Samoa) Meleisea 1987:126–127, 208–211.

^aThe date is the Trust Territory election, but district legislatures were evolving different forms and franchises during the 1950s; see table in Meller 1969:176.

^bThe Indian members elected in 1929 then boycotted the Legislative Council over the issue of a common roll.

^cSee endnote 10.

^dSome 1,500 Melanesian men got enfranchised in 1945. Electors also voted in metropolitan French elections.

^eWomen were granted the right to vote in 1951, but first voted in 1960.

^fThere were communal franchises (British, French, ni-Vanuatu) for an Advisory Council since 1957, but the ni-Vanuatu were indirectly elected from local councils. Twenty-nine of the seats to the first Representative Assembly were elected on universal suffrage in 1975, but there were also thirteen seats for “chiefs” and “economic interests” (Henningham 1992). The first general election with an undivided electorate was held in 1979.

^gIn 1900 the German governor, Solf, had apparently been pressing for *matai* to elect *faipule* (local officials) from among their members; see Meleisea 1987:59.

though reforms in the early 1980s reasserted control from Paris (Larmour 1985; Chivot 1985). Thus the "state" executive is responsible to a legislature, but one in France, to which all citizens in the overseas territories elect representatives. There, of course, they form a tiny minority of the national parliament, and the citizens who elect them include visiting soldiers, metropolitan officials, and migrant workers with few links to the territory (Danielsson 1983; Danielsson and Danielsson 1986).

Relations between the United States and its "commonwealth" (the Northern Marianas), "organized unincorporated territory" (Guam), and "unorganized and unincorporated territory" (American Samoa) are complex and contested, and the test of executive responsibility is hard to apply. Each has a popularly elected governor and local legislature, but they differ in forms and degrees of supervision by the executive and legislative branches in Washington. Guam and American Samoa also elect nonvoting delegates to the metropolitan legislature rather than voting members as in the French territories. The dates in the table for these three polities refer to the first elections of governors.

Palau's status was unresolved while the nuclear-free provisions of its 1981 constitution conflicted with U.S. military rights under the Compact of Free Association negotiated between the two governments. Seven referenda failed to approve the compact, but an eighth succeeded in November 1993, after the constitution was amended to require a simple majority rather than 75 percent approval (D. Schuster, pers. com., 8 Dec. 1993).

The two right-hand columns of Table 1 try to capture an indication of a third aspect of democracy, freedom of speech. It is of little use to have an executive responsible to a legislature if neither legislators nor the electors know what is happening, can consider alternatives, or campaign for them to be adopted. An important kind of power is the power to define the agenda and simply exclude, rather than having to defeat, alternatives (Lukes 1974:16-20). Freedom of speech and of association, for example, were sharply curtailed in Fiji after the coups, by both decree and bullying. The presence of nongovernment news media is simply one among a number of possible indicators. Tolerance of trades unions or antigovernment demonstrations would be others.

Privately owned media dependent on advertising, government licenses, and work permits may be more complacent than an official news service with statutory independence and crusading journalists (Robie 1990). Newspapers have limited penetration of scattered islands, sometimes with different languages and low levels of literacy. Nevertheless, nongovernment newspapers in Papua New Guinea (notably the

church-sponsored *Times*), Tonga's *Kele'a*, and the Solomon Islands *Star* have played such an important political role, particularly by exposing government corruption and incompetence, that the existence of non-government newspapers seems a reliable if only partial indicator of the presence of free speech and association. Compared to a flowering of such newspapers at independence, their absence in Vanuatu has certainly had a chilling effect on politics there.

Each of these characteristics of representative democracy may be present without the other. There may be universal suffrage electing people to an impotent parliament. There may be parliamentary government with little outside criticism or dissent. Or a bureaucratic regime may tolerate a high degree of free speech and association. Nevertheless, these characteristics are linked to the extent that the absence of one tends to weaken the others. Lane and Ersson find that although there are many indicators of democracy (competitive party politics, human rights, and so forth), they are so closely correlated in practice that "the concept of a democratic regime is empirically unambiguous" (1990:133).

Several patterns, with some clusters and interesting deviant cases, can be seen in the data in Table 1. The extensions of the franchise show selection by race, gender, and rank (in Tonga and Western Samoa). Generally, the sequence was white men and chiefs, other men, and finally women (though the sources are often not precise on the latter).⁹

Tokelau (population sixteen hundred) and Pitcairn (one hundred) do not have formal systems of universal adult suffrage, though both are so small as to be in practical terms direct democracies. However, they also score a "no" for responsible executives, joined by Tonga (a monarchy), and Fiji (between the coups). My data on nongovernment news media are patchy, but twelve polities score an unequivocal "yes" on each of the conventional criteria for democracy, rising to fourteen if the larger French territories are included. The number rises to fifteen if Fiji is included despite the racial bias in its representation. Most of the others miss out because of the absence of nongovernment media, which could have more to do with problems of investment, distribution, and literacy than with the absence of freedom of speech it is supposed, for our purposes, to indicate.

The median date for a fully responsible executive is the late seventies, with the median date for universal suffrage more tightly bunched at 1965–1967. There are some interesting exceptions earlier and later. Western Samoa was the first to achieve a fully responsible legislature (1962), but the last to open it to universal suffrage (in 1991). Tonga was

the earliest to extend the franchise to adult men, though there were some brief attempts at nineteenth-century democracy in Guam (between Spanish and American rule), French Polynesia (Tahiti), and the Cook Islands (Rarotonga).¹⁰ Two of the three French territories were relatively early in achieving universal suffrage (in the early 1950s). Vanuatu did not achieve universal suffrage until 1975, only five years before independence. As an Anglo-French condominium it lost both ways: missing out on the universal suffrage the French territories achieved in the 1950s and that of its British neighbors in the 1960s.

The Social Bases of Democracy

The information compiled in Table 1 indicates the current pattern of representative democracy in the region. But such information neither explains how this pattern was achieved nor predicts whether it will persist. The *Fiji Times* editorial that provided the title for this article argues that democracy is a "flower," rooted in particular social conditions and perhaps unable to flourish without them. Liberals have argued that a minimum level of property ownership or education is necessary for effective democracy, and restrictions on voting based on property, language, or education feature in early South Pacific electoral provisions. Marxists have argued that in societies riven by conflict between capital and labor, democracy must be a sham. The observer seeking to identify the social bases of democracy in the South Pacific faces several difficulties.

First, two distinct periods need explaining: the brief but restricted suffrage in the transition to colonial rule, and the steadier introduction of universal suffrage (typically in the sixties) and responsible government (typically in the seventies) (Table 1). This "second wave" of democracy was introduced in the late colonial period, so to understand its introduction we need to consider the social conditions for democracy in the metropole as well as the colony. For example, the fact that universal suffrage was introduced into the French colonies in the early 1950s and the British colonies in the 1960s had as much to do with different conditions in Britain and France, and in the international system, as with different conditions within their Pacific territories. We also need to take sequences, borrowing, lesson-drawing, and precedents into account. Support for the introduction of democracy may be distinct from support for its subsequent maintenance or resistance to its overthrow in quite different historical circumstances.

Second, several dimensions of social structure are likely to be relevant

to democracy: The suffrage categories in Table 1 suggest race, rank, and gender were regarded as important by those involved in extending or limiting the franchise. Class may "lie behind" these. In spite of a scaffolding of national censuses and a depth of anthropological research, the overall social structure of modern South Pacific societies is not very clear. Marxist accounts have had to back and fill in applying the classic categories (Fitzpatrick 1980; MacWilliam and Thompson 1992:5–8). Nor is there a necessary link between structure (if we knew it) and action. In Marxist language, a class "in itself" does not necessarily act as a class "for itself." Nor do nonclass categories of people necessarily act collectively.

Finally, the social conditions for democracy can be transformed by democracy, which thereby institutionalizes itself.

Recent comparative research by Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens (1992) on democracy and development in the advanced capitalist countries, Latin America, Central America, and the Caribbean suggests factors that may also be relevant to the South Pacific. Their research has sought to reconcile two different findings. On the one hand, quantitative cross-national studies tend to show a correlation between development and democracy, without necessarily explaining why. On the other hand, qualitative comparative research tends to link the two in the particular conditions of early capitalism and is "far more pessimistic about today's developing countries" (Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens 1992:3).

Following Barrington Moore's *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (1967), Rueschemeyer et al. start with landlords whose labor-repressive systems of agriculture make them hostile to democracy. They argue that the push for democracy tends to come from the new working classes, which need allies. Thus they disagree with those who see the middle classes as the bearers of democracy: The middle classes may jump either way, based in part on their perception of longer-term threats from the working class. Political parties play an important role in moderating perceived threats. Perceived class interests and allegiances are socially constructed, and what happens in one place may provide a model for others. Once a particular pattern is established, it may be hard to shift, so conditions for the establishment of democracy may be different from those for its maintenance.

Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens explain the correlation in terms of relative class power: Capitalist development tends to open up spaces for democracy and creates new classes to press for its realization. These democratic opportunities, however, are also determined by state

and interstate structures of power. History matters in the sense that the outcome depends on the sequence of the interaction. Existing patterns constrain future possibilities, but institutionalization takes time to achieve. Rueschemeyer et al.'s explanation of the statistical relationship between capitalist development and democracy thus depends on the sequencing of the interaction between three factors: the balance of class power, the power and autonomy of state, and transnational structures of power. These three factors, their interaction, and their sequencing will now provide a framework for considering the social bases of democracy in the South Pacific region.

Relative Class Power

In Rueschemeyer et al.'s analysis, "landlords stand at the opposite pole from the working class in their constitutional interests" (1992:60). Landlords resist giving up the power they held under "agrarian feudalism" and they will be more antidemocratic "the more they rely on state-backed coercion rather than on the working of the market" to control their labor force. They are also under threat from peasants with small or no land holdings "because they demand land more frequently than workers insist on control of the means of production" (Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens 1992). There are two usual suspects for "labor-repressive" landlords in the South Pacific: chiefs and big plantation owners.

Chiefs. The typical form of precontact land tenure in the South Pacific was by kinship group. However, in the more extreme forms of precontact Polynesian chieftaincy, particularly in Hawaii, chiefs did dispossess kinship groups and claim to own the land themselves. Kirch describes how by the time of European contact, "Hawaiian society had come to comprise a conical clan of chiefs superposed over a truncated class of commoners who worked the land and paid tribute to their lords" (1989:257). Commoners had "lost their genealogies, and they lost direct control of their land," though vestiges of reciprocity remained (Kirch 1989:257, 260-261). Stratification was also taking place in Tonga, where land was "allocated by the paramount to his subordinate chiefs, who in turn respected the rights of commoners in exchange for regular tribute, and for labour when required" (Kirch 1989:232).

Elsewhere in Polynesia, kinship, the need for popular support in competition with other chiefs, and the possibility of rebellion kept relations between chiefs and commoners more reciprocal. Tribute was repaid in

various ways, and chiefs could not in practice dispossess those who failed to pay.

The Hawaiian monarchy did not survive, but the emerging Tongan monarchy redeployed itself in ways that demonstrate an intimate and intricate relationship between landownership, labor, and democracy, with implications also for gender (as Gailey 1987 shows). Briefly, Tonga's king claimed to own all land, though some was subject to nobles as hereditary estates. Traditional rights of use were codified and later expressed as an entitlement for each adult male of a block of land and a house site. In-kind donations and labor service to chiefs were formally banned but replaced by a tax-rent. Adult males got the right to vote for representatives to a parliament dominated by the king's nominees and representatives of the nobles. Meanwhile women—particularly non-chiefly women—were losing the influence they had held through kinship, particularly as sisters, and as producers of traditionally valued goods such as fine mats (Gailey 1987). Introduced religion and the new laws increasingly addressed women through men, as wives, and they did not get the vote until 1960. Thus the earliest form of democracy, at least in terms of universal adult-male suffrage, emerged from one of the more-stratified traditional systems. Clearly, suffrage is part of a (continuing) struggle in which the king must often appeal for popular support against the nobles who might challenge him.

This popular mechanism appears more obviously in places like Western Samoa and Fiji, where contenders for paramount titles are more numerous. In the terms of Rueschemeyer et al.'s argument, these systems are only partly labor repressive and have not actually dispossessed the producers from the land. The systems are thus not fully "feudal" in the sense, say, implied in the Labour party's criticism of the chiefly system in Fiji (National Federation Party and the Fiji Labour Party Coalition 1991:34–35). Chiefs may, of course, be trying to become more feudal. In Fiji, chiefs get state help in ensuring tribute from the use of land in the 22.5 percent of rents reserved for chiefs by the Native Land Trust Board (Kamikamica 1987:231). However, they do not own the land and they cannot dispossess people from it nor alienate the land itself (though they may claim some of its product).

Big Plantation Owners. The second possible candidates for antidemocratic landlords are the big plantation owners: Unilever in the Solomon Islands, the Colonial Sugar Refining Company in Fiji, the Société Française des Nouvelles-Hébrides, and so on. Their political power was based not on feudal hangovers but on their centrality in the early colo-

nial political economy, particularly as a source of government revenue. However, like feudal landlords, they had little interest in expanding democracy to include representatives of labor, the landless, or smallholders.¹¹

There might be several ways in which comparison would show the antidemocratic character of plantation ownership. My first hypothesis is that democracy might be more likely before plantations were established or in places where there was less alienation of land. Or, since Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens (1992) emphasize “relative class position”—a struggle between generally white male landlords and generally nonwhite male and female workers and tenants—we might see the gap between the acquisition of the franchise by white men and others as an indicator of contest, and (a second hypothesis) expect that the gap would be least where there was no plantation agriculture and most where it was dominant.

Table 2 tallies the extent of land alienation, by freehold or leasehold,

TABLE 2. Land Alienation and Representative Democracy

	Private Freehold or Leasehold (% of total area)	Responsible Executive (year)	Universal Suffrage (year)
Tuvalu	0	1978	1967
Niue	0	1974	1960
Cook Islands	1	1965	1957
Papua New Guinea	1	1975	1964
Solomon Islands	3	1978	1967
Tonga	4	No	1960
Western Samoa	5	1962	1991
Vanuatu	15	1980	1975
New Caledonia	23	No	1951
Guam	24	1971	1931
Fiji ^a	32	1970, 1992	1963

Sources: (Cook Islands) Crocombe 1987:64; (Fiji) Ward 1985:29; (Guam) Souder 1987:221; (New Caledonia) Ward 1982:33; (Papua New Guinea) Papua New Guinea 1973:45; (Niue) Tongatule 1981:27; (Solomon Islands) Larmour 1981:31; (Tonga) Maude and Sevele 1987:126; (Tuvalu) Naniseni 1981:11; (Vanuatu) Van Trease 1984:22; (Western Samoa) Thomas 1981:47.

^aThe figure for Fiji is particularly large as it includes land leased on behalf of its traditional owners by the Native Land Trust Board (NLTB). Some is leased to smallholders and some for plantation-style agriculture. There is no reason to count it out simply because it is “Fijian”: As an institution, the interests of the NLTB are opposed to those of autonomous smallholders (who want lower rents or freehold title) and to those of labor (who want higher wages, either at the expense of rents or profits).

in countries for which figures are available. Land ownership is important because fear of its loss was supposed, in Rueschemeyer et al.'s argument, to drive landlords' hostility to democracy. The data, however, show no apparent relationship between the extent of alienation and relative lateness in achieving responsible government or universal suffrage. Part of the reason may be in the measures themselves: Not all alienated land is used for plantations, and these modern totals do not allow the attention to historical sequencing required by Rueschemeyer et al.'s argument. Some land, particularly in New Caledonia, was alienated for smallholdings; and land alienated for plantation purposes has latterly been put to other, less labor-intensive uses, such as cattle ranching or residential subdivisions in Vanuatu. The political weight of plantation owners has been reduced since independence, as companies have been wholly or partly nationalized or reorganized around smallholders, as in Fiji, Western Samoa, and the Solomon Islands.

However, looking back to Table 1 there is some support for the first of our two hypotheses: The brief precolonial experiments with democracy took place in territories relatively free of land alienation (for example, Rarotonga in the Cook Islands).

Tonga is evidence for the first hypothesis: earliest democracy and relatively little land alienation or equivalent indigenous plantation agriculture. The causal flow might in fact be the other way. Wider suffrage creates the possibility of resisting consolidation, enclosure, and alienation of land.

There is not much evidence here for the second hypothesis, that the gap between white male and universal suffrage is longest where plantation agriculture is dominant. Such gaps existed in Fiji and New Caledonia, each of which experienced substantial land alienation, but also in Tonga and Western Samoa, which did not. The Fiji–Western Samoa–Tonga cluster suggests chieflikeness might have had an effect.

Guam might be the exception that proves the rule. Its history of Spanish plantations is more like Latin America's. It won universal suffrage under U.S. control in 1931, but half of the alienated land is now used for military rather than plantation purposes.

The Working Class. The other side of "relative class power" is the working class, defined in terms of its reliance on selling its labor to subsist and its lack of the guarantees of subsistence provided by membership in a landholding group. We might look for this working class in plantations and mines that provide both the circumstances and oppor-

tunity to organize for narrowly industrial and wider political goals, such as democracy (which may then be instrumental in promoting industrial goals like minimum wages or health and safety legislation). South Pacific trade unions have promoted generally democratic principles (such as a common electoral roll in Fiji), as well as particular political parties (such as the Solomon Islands General Workers Union and the Solomon Islands Nationalist party; see Frazer 1992).

Ian Frazer's 1990 account of the postwar Maasina Rule movement in the Solomon Islands provides a neat example of the interaction of the working class with Rueschemeyer et al.'s other factors. Maasina Rule was a popular movement based on Malaita, an island that had provided labor for plantations elsewhere in the Solomon Islands and in Australia. Members of the movement drifted into confrontation with the colonial government over what Frazer calls the movement's "collective boycott" of labor recruitment and its replacement of colonial rule at the local level with its own islandwide institutions. Its leaders were arrested in 1947 and tried for sedition. Frazer argues that although the movement has tended to be analyzed as a precursor of Solomon Islands nationalism, it also expressed an "industrial consciousness" developed by working on the plantations and for the U.S. army during the war. Its challenge was not only to the legitimacy of the colonial government but to the viability of the plantation economy.

Coincidentally with the Maasina Rule, the postwar British Labour government was pressing its colonies to reform their labor legislation, against the resistance of colonial planters. The legislation was changed in the Solomon Islands, but not because of local pressure, Frazer concludes. Reform "owed more to international labour conventions than local circumstances" (Frazer 1990:202).

Frazer's case demonstrates, on the one hand, Rueschemeyer et al.'s argument that capitalist development opens up spaces for democracy and creates a working class to press for it. Maasina Rule's political goals were clearly democratic, and broader democracy was a condition for the pursuit of particular industrial concerns. The middle class that is often credited with pressure for democracy was quite absent from the postwar Solomon Islands. Frazer argues that early class struggles also took this wider political form in England and notes that Maasina Rule leaders were prosecuted under "the same laws used to suppress combinations of workers in early industrial England" (1990:191). Specifically, industrial organizations like trade unions came later in England and not to the Solomon Islands until the 1960s. The case also shows the impor-

tance of transnational factors, such as the political complexion of the metropolitan government and the role of international conventions in particular domestic outcomes.

State Autonomy

Having a responsible executive is significant for state autonomy. Colonial states are relatively autonomous of the societies they govern, but some may be more vulnerable to local pressures and more dependent on (say) local revenue and personnel than others. Indirect rule, for example, may mean that colonial governments are manipulated by the traditional authorities they govern through. Or a requirement that the colonial government raise its own revenue may make it overly dependent on foreign investment or local business interests that it can tax. Yet in particular cases, and with support from the metropolitan capital, colonial officials may be able to resist determined pressure. The British Solomon Islands Protectorate government, for example, stood up to Unilever over its demands to import Asian labor in the 1920s (Laracy 1983) and by reclaiming undeveloped land from the company on Kolombangara island (Bennett 1987:33). The colonial state's autonomy may also allow it to encourage the formation of trade unions in spite of pressures from local business or to introduce female or universal suffrage in spite of hostility from masculinist or traditional interests.

To the extent that an independent state is staffed and funded from local sources and responsible to locally elected politicians, it will be less autonomous of the local society. It may become an arena within which those antagonisms are fought out. Accordingly, political independence may tend to reduce state autonomy from society, and if local and international sources of power are hostile to democracy, then colonially introduced democracy may become more vulnerable. Particularly, if it is overthrown there may be less pressure to restore it.

Transnational Structures of Power

We have seen that the introduction of democracy has been an effect of what was happening in metropolitan countries as well as the pressures for and against democracy in each colony. International firms are another powerful influence on colonial policy and can affect the introduction and operations of democracy directly and indirectly, through actions in the colony and those in the metropole. Direct effects include financial support for particular candidates or defining issues through

media ownership. Indirectly, popularly elected candidates find the need to attract and retain foreign investment sets limits for the scope of democracy. These are not just transnational effects, as governments must also anticipate the effects of their actions on the "confidence" of domestic investors.

More general transnational effects on democracy include the role of the United Nations and its agencies in promoting decolonization and supervising elections, for example in Papua New Guinea and the U.S. Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (which became Palau, the Northern Mariana Islands, the Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia). Transnational strategic and military factors have also determined the prospects for democracy in the South Pacific. U.S. strategic interests in Micronesia have limited the scope for the exercise of democracy: The United States pressed Palau to vote to change its nuclear-free constitution. The Cold War justified the displacement of populations for nuclear testing in French Polynesia and what became the Republic of the Marshall Islands. The U.S. military presence on Guam limits the scope of action of the local legislature, for example, over land use matters.

However, military factors are not necessarily or entirely antidemocratic. The Second World War had a generally democratic effect. It showed that colonial governments could be defeated by non-Western people. It provided liberating and well-paid experiences of working with the Americans, inspiring the Maasina Rule leaders described above. It also led to the Atlantic charter and trusteeship provisions, which made the colonial governments give postwar priority to development and welfare.

Foreign aid has had a similarly ambiguous effect on democracy. Since the end of the Cold War the World Bank and aid donors have begun to make aid conditional on democratic reforms, particularly in Africa (Jeffries 1993). Australia, New Zealand, and the United States have also done the same in relation to Fiji after the coups. Aid to nongovernment agencies (newspapers, women's groups, etc.) can strengthen civil society against the state and promote the interests of women in spite of masculine parliamentary indifference. However, to the extent that aid is intergovernmental, it also serves to increase the state's local autonomy, which (depending on local structures of power) may allow it to resist local pressure for or against democracy. To the extent that intergovernmental aid, particularly military assistance, is governed by strategic concerns, then the donor may be indifferent to the internal character of the recipient regime.

Democracy, Ethnicity, and Gender

Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens found that racial and ethnic divisions became important “when they are linked to class and/or where racial and ethnic groups are differentially linked to the state apparatus”; at the limit, “these divisions may constitute social segments that must be treated much like classes themselves” (1992:48). This formulation seems to me a good way through what has become a bitter but inconclusive academic debate whether the 1987 crisis in Fiji was “really about” ethnicity or class.¹² It reasserts the role of politics in organizing around social divisions and takes note of the way that the state can organize, and disorganize, potentially collective actors such as classes or ethnic groups.

Rueschemeyer et al. do not deal very thoroughly with gender divisions, arguing that (historically) class inclusion has preceded gender inclusion. Class inclusion, they argue, has been more violently resisted, perhaps because class relations “are more intimately linked to state interventions in society.” However, they note that when women did get the vote, “their voting participation did not significantly change the political spectrum in any country” (Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens 1992:48). In Western Samoa, for example, the Human Rights Protection party was returned to power after universal suffrage substantially raised the proportion of women in the electorate (*Samoa Sunday Observer*, 7 April 1991).

Conclusions

Representative democracy was installed as the outcome of a sustained local struggle only in some parts of the South Pacific region. Elsewhere its coming reflected earlier struggles in metropolitan countries and their other colonies, refracted through those former colonies’ membership of the United Nations. The Second World War, the Cold War, and their endings also shaped the conditions for democracy in the region.

Certain indigenous traditions are consistent with ideas of direct democracy, and even chiefly traditions suggest circumstances in which popular resistance may be justified. However, representative democracy’s lack of local roots may have mattered less before independence than after, when states settled in to the societies they governed. Meanwhile, economic development has brought into being new classes of people with potentially opposing interests in democracy.

Although the idea of representative democracy is now pervasive in

the South Pacific, it is not always liberal in the sense of giving priority to individual over community values. Multicultural polities like Fiji or Papua New Guinea may need to recognize community as well as individual rights and make compromises between the two. To extend the *Fiji Times* metaphor, representative democracy is a foreign flower that grows in different containers: independent states, unincorporated territories, and so on. The soil in which it is planted is becoming more layered and sedimented by class formation and migration. Its growth continues to depend as much on the international weather as on the domestic soil.

NOTES

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1. The region provides opportunities for examining other issues in democratic theory. Lawson (1991) considers that democracy implies the presence of legitimate opposition and concludes that Fiji was never really a democracy even before the 1987 coups. Fiji and New Caledonia exemplify tensions between indigenous rights and liberalism that are sympathetically explored by Kymlicka (1989) in relation to Canada. The extension of suffrage in Western Samoa provides an opportunity to explore feminist arguments about the limitations on representation (Phillips 1991) and the relationship between gender, family, and civil society (Pateman 1988). The referenda that broke up the U.S. and British colonies in Micronesia, and separatism in Melanesia, provide early examples of issues of self-determination that have become more pressing on the international system since the end of the Cold War (Buchanan 1992).

2. The South Pacific provides opportunities for two kinds of comparison, distinguished by Przeworski and Teune as "most similar systems" and "most different systems" (1970:31-39); it can be treated as a region of similarity, "sealed by history or geography" (Dogan and Pelassy 1984:15). Another strategy, suggested by Castles (1989:2-3), is to compare in order to isolate the puzzling or deviant cases, which then require further explanation

(Tonga often plays this exceptional role in making sense of South Pacific politics). I use all three strategies in this article: Tables 1 and 2 compare the countries in a given region with each other; arguments derived from Latin America, the Caribbean, and Europe are introduced; and I also occasionally dwell on interesting exceptions, such as—depending on the circumstances—Tonga, Western Samoa, Guam, or Papua New Guinea.

3. For a self-consciously nationalist account of South Pacific politics, see Robie 1989.

4. The Solomon Islands 1987 review, for example, advocated the restoration of capital punishment, limits on the introduction of new religions, limits on the number of political parties, limits on freedom of movement between provinces, and discrimination in favor of indigenous people (Larmour 1989:204). In setting up a similar committee in Vanuatu, the prime minister called upon it to overhaul constitutional provisions for human rights (Adams 1991:419).

5. "Supernatural power or efficacy, transferred from the deities to the chief by virtue of his descent" (Kirch 1989:288).

6. "Sacred, prohibited" (Kirch 1989:288).

7. In a reverse process "the West" is often "occidentalised," to borrow Sedgewick's phrase (1990:242), when islanders talk about "its" individualism, lack of morality, and so on.

8. The phrase comes from Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983. In the South Pacific this approach was anticipated by Crocombe (1964) and France (1969) in relation to land tenure. For recent discussions, see Keesing 1989 and Jolly 1992.

9. So-called universal suffrage is, in fact, adults only, thus concealing a currently unquestioned bias against young people below the voting age.

10. Electors to the Tahitian General Council included indigenous people, but they were subject to a French literacy requirement (Henningham, pers. com., 1992). Danielsson says that the council worked "largely for the benefit of the French settlers," which is a slightly different point (1983:194–195). Similarly, Pryor is skeptical about the Rarotongan assembly, noting that the three representatives were "nominally chosen by the people but in practice largely determined by the ariki" (1983:160). Nevertheless, if only formally, the principle of universal suffrage had been introduced and stands as a potential critique of both chiefly and colonial bureaucratic authority.

11. Mine owners, who were influential in the political economy of Nauru and the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony and who are becoming increasingly influential in Papua New Guinea, might have had a slightly different mix of interests and threats.

12. See Robertson and Tamanisau 1988, Sutherland 1992 for class; see Scarr 1988 and Ravuvu 1991 for ethnicity.

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**BORROWED MOIETIES, BORROWED NAMES:
SOCIOLINGUISTIC CONTACT BETWEEN TANNA AND
FUTUNA-ANIWA, VANUATU**

John Lynch and Kenneth Fakamuria
University of the South Pacific

There is a history of considerable contact between the people of Tanna, Futuna, and Aniwa, three islands in the Tafea (Southern) District of Vanuatu. This essay addresses one aspect of that contact, which involves elements of social organization: Tanna societies appear to have borrowed a moiety system from Futuna or Aniwa, but Futuna and Aniwa have borrowed the Tannese names for these moieties.¹

The people of Futuna and Aniwa speak two fairly closely related dialects of a Polynesian Outlier language. The languages of Tanna are also Oceanic, but not Polynesian, and have undergone considerable change in the phonological structure of words. Borrowings in either direction, therefore, are relatively easy to identify, which makes the nature of the contact easier to reconstruct than in some other parts of the Pacific, where the languages in contact are relatively similar phonologically and borrowings are consequently more difficult to identify.

Only one area of borrowing has been documented in detail to date. This concerns maritime vocabulary: The Tanna languages have borrowed very heavily indeed from Futuna-Aniwa in a range of semantic fields such as fish names, names of winds, names of parts of the canoe, fishing technology, and so on (Lynch n.d.). Considerable borrowing (probably more by the Tanna languages from Futuna-Aniwa than in the reverse direction) is apparent in other areas of material culture, although these have not been fully documented as yet.

Origins of the Tanna Moiety System

Five languages are spoken on Tanna, and different sources of information come from different language-areas.² Lindstrom's dictionary of Kwamera defines both *Koiameta* (also *Kaviameta*) and *Numrukwen* as "one of two traditional social moieties which today have no marital or residential significance" (1986:63, 102). The corresponding Lenakel terms are *Koiameta* and *Numrukuen* (Lynch 1977).

The moieties are referred to as *inteta* (sometimes *niteta*) in Kwamera and as *niko* in Lenakel, terms that also apply to ships or canoes. The moieties are supposed to have been introduced to Tanna at the end of a period called *Niproou* (Lenakel) or *Nipróu* (Kwamera), referring to a mythological time of peace before the onset of warfare, group land ownership, marriage exchange, and so forth, all of which are associated with the two canoes or moieties. Guiart's version of the origin story is as follows:

Deux hommes, s'appelant respectivement Numrukwen et Koyometa, arrivent en pirogue près de Yakutèrès (Yatukwey, Port-Résolution); leur pirogue coule; ils prennent tout ce qu'il y avait dans la pirogue et se retrouvent à terre, dans un abri sous roche d'accès difficile, sous forme de deux pierres, l'une rouge (*Koyometa*) l'autre blanche (*Numrukwen*). (Guiart 1956:93)³

Part of the origin story told to one of us goes like this:

The people came to Tanna in two ships, *Kaplilau* and *Niproou*, and landed at *Lenimtehin*. They lived like we do, and they spread around Tanna, and life was good; there was no anger, only friendship in the beginning. But then they began to fight each other. . . . They went on fighting, and one hit another with a sling. And he was hurt and said to his brother, "My friend, I want you to avenge me". . . . And he threw a stone and hit one of them on the forehead and killed him. This was the first death, and they looked on death there and grew angry. Then they took up the bow and arrow and war-clubs and began fighting.

The fighting was still going on when the white man came to Tanna. The people asked for guns, and he gave them some, and in exchange they sold the foreigner a small amount of land. They began shooting each other, and some tried hard to steal

guns from others, and the stealing of guns which the white man had exchanged for land kept going on. They bought a lot of guns, and the war went on apace with the island divided into two *niko*, Numrukuen and Koiameta.

Bonnemaison (1987) has a slightly different version again. The two moieties are closely linked with the two stones mentioned by Guiart, Numrukwén and Kaviameta, and with two canoes. In the beginning, everyone was together in the "canoe" *Nipróu*, and the island was at peace. But then there were two "canoes," said to have been commanded by Karapanemum and Mwatiktík (i.e., Mauitikitiki); and the "*loi des deux pirogues*" made warfare possible. Traditions vary as to whether fighting started in the Whitesands area as a result of a dispute over an exchange that was unequal, or in Middle Bush after a war "game" saw someone accidentally killed. In either case, the peace of *Nipróu* was broken by the arrival of the two canoes and the division into two moieties, Numrukwén and Kaviameta.

There is obviously some confusion in these origin stories. But the confusion is really on matters of detail: All accounts agree that there was a period without a system of dual organization and that a moiety system was introduced to Tanna.

The Tanna Moiety System

Although Humphreys (1926) argues that these moieties were geographically based, this does not seem to have been strictly the case, at least traditionally. Guiart (1956:90) notes that it is certainly true that, while the east and southeast coasts, the Lenakel area in the central west, and the Green Hill area in the north are heavily Numrukwén, and the southwest and much of the northwest are heavily Kaviameta,

la plus grande partie des agglomérations du reste de l'île apparaissent divisées entre les deux groupes. Les *yimwayim* se réclament de l'une ou l'autre dénomination; il arrive même souvent que les dignitaires se partager entre *Numrukwen* et *Koyometa*, à l'intérieur du même *yimwayim*, sans que les informateurs considèrent ces cas comme aberrants. (Guiart 1956:90)⁴

He also notes that the preponderance of a certain moiety in a particular region of the island is due mostly to the relatively recent out-migration of one group from what was once a more mixed area (Guiart 1956:91).

Lindstrom agrees with Guiart that the distinction between the two moieties does not appear to have great practical significance today.

Moieties once set the bounds of warring factions on the island. Major wars . . . occurred across rather than within moieties. . . . Although people usually know their moiety affiliation, they today rarely act on this. No major body of binary oppositions symbolizes membership in a moiety although one man explained that . . . Numrukwen arrived first, is "on the bottom," or female and has greater power, if less ability and knowledge with food than does Koyometa. Koyometa arrived second, is male, and controls the power to produce impressive foodstuffs. . . . Moiety affiliation, in addition, plays no part in people's marriage affiliations. Given a two-section kinship system with moieties, one might expect these groups to be exogamous—exchanging women between themselves. People assert, however, that moieties were historically endogamous. Men, according to their reasoning, were afraid to marry a woman of the opposite moiety lest she betray them to her brothers. (Lindstrom 1981:72–73)

With the cessation of warfare, the importance of these two moieties has declined (although moiety divisions have spilled over into national politics, such that support of a particular political party often corresponds with moiety affiliation). Nevertheless, the moieties are still important in relation to land disputes and in dance-exchanges (Kwamera *nakwiari*, Lenakel *nikoviaar*), at which each moiety has its symbols: Kaviameta people are said to be red, are accused of having several languages, and their symbol is a red-breasted bird, the cardinal honey-eater (*Myzomela cardinalis*; Kwamera *kaviamtameta*, Lenakel *koia-metameta*); Numrukwén people are said to be black (according to Guiart) or white (according to Bonnemaïson), and their symbol is a domestic fowl with ruffled plumage. Particular species of yam, taro, and *Cordyline* are also associated with each moiety (see Bonnemaïson 1987:291; Guiart 1956:91–92).

We shall note shortly that stones representing the moieties are important in Futuna. Apart from the original stones mentioned by Guiart, moiety-stones do not figure prominently in Tanna today. However, Monty Lindstrom informs us that Chief Rigiau unburied two such stones (named Kaviameta and Numrukwén) with much ceremony at Ianamwakel village on the east coast of Tanna in the mid-1980s.

The Intermediaries

In addition to the two moieties, there is a third, intermediary group. Lindstrom (1986) defines the term *Kout kisua* as:

1. Traditional social identity usually possessed by one or two men in a locality (i.e., in an *imwarim* group). These men mediated disputes between two traditional, non-residential, non-marital social moieties, *numrukuen* [*sic*] and *koiameta* by 'going between the canoes'.
2. A mediator between disputing local groups.
3. Spy, someone who informs the enemies of a group of its plans (1986:63-64)

The corresponding Lenakel term is *Kouatkasua*.

Lindstrom elaborates on the role of the *Kout kisua* (1981:73). He is "an intermediary who is able to talk safely with men of both moieties, one who 'goes between the canoes'. . . . [He] retains primary affiliation with either Numrukwen or Koyometa. Unlike his fellow moiety members, however, he historically approached the men of the opposite moiety to arrange the peace or deliver a message" (Lindstrom 1981:73).⁵ This is, therefore, a traditional social identity usually possessed by one or two men in a locality, who act as mediators (and sometimes as spies).

In summary, then, Tanna societies have a tradition that speaks of a period when there was no division within the society and says that the current system of dual organization was introduced to the island. The moiety division was once important militarily, but this is no longer the case; however, moiety membership is still important in traditional ceremonies (and also to some extent in modern politics), and there is also a group of intermediaries that mediate between the two moieties.

Published Accounts of the Futuna-Aniwa Moiety System

West Futuna-Aniwa is a Polynesian Outlier language spoken in two dialects, one on Futuna and the other on the neighboring island of Aniwa. There are basically two major published sources of information on Futuna-Aniwa language and society, in the works of Capell and Dougherty.

Capell's 1984 dictionary gives *Namruke* as the name of "one of the two moieties in Futunese society" but does not list the name of the other. He does, however, list *Surama* and *Yefotuma* as the names of the two Aniwan moieties. In his anthropological study, Capell noted that

there seems little doubt that in pre-Christian days both Futuna and Aniwa societies were based on dual organization. This does not appear in [Gunn's] *Gospel in Futuna*, nor in any of Dr. Paton's writings on Aniwa, but the names Iefotuma and Surama are given as the two geographical divisions of Aniwa, and Dr. Gunn, in conversation with the present writer (to whom study of the kinship system had already suggested the likelihood of a moiety system) was able to recall that after the writing of his book he had learnt from some of the old men that two divisions had previously existed on Futuna. The name of one was Namruke, the other was not recorded. These, however, were not territorial divisions, and they have been allowed to lapse. Very little detail of their function is likely to be obtained now. They would both be found in the same hamlet, membership in them was inherited through the mother and carried certain obligations (such as taking turns in giving feasts), and each had its own *marae* or public square with sacred banyan in each hamlet. (Capell 1960:2)

Dougherty gives the names of the two moieties in Futuna as *Namruke* and *Kavimeta* (1983:636–638); the gloss for each, contra Capell's assertion that these are matrilineal moieties, is "one of two major *patrilineal* descent groups of Futuna" [emphasis added]. Dougherty also mentions a third descent group, *Fana*, defined as a "descent group which functions as a mediator between two moieties based on descent, Kavimeta and Numruke [*sic*]. Members of Fana were born into one of the major groups and raised by a member of the other descent group, usually a mother's brother" (Dougherty 1983:636). There is a clear parallel here between Futuna Fana and Tanna Kout kisua.⁶

The Futuna Moiety System

Research by one of us has shown that the two *vaka* or moieties (*vaka*, "canoe"), which are known as Namruke and Kawiameta, were definitely in existence in pre-Christian times: Unlike in Tanna, there is no tradition in Futuna of a period before the existence of a dual-organization system, nor is there any tradition of the moieties' having been introduced to Futuna (from Tanna or elsewhere). Traditionally, cross-moiety marriage was prohibited, and thus one was born, married into, and remained Namruke or Kawiameta.

The main activities or preoccupations of the two moieties in the past

seem to have been feasting, which involved the exchange of pigs, yams, taro, and sugarcane, and the resulting "wars" that broke out (presumably as the result of disputes about these exchanges). Namruke are characterized as being quiet but evasive and calculating, thriving on the accumulation of wealth. Kawiameta, on the other hand, are supposed to be outspoken, direct, and straightforward.

Both *vaka* are found in each village, and each village has a Namruke and a Kawiameta *marae*. Stone images relating to both moieties are found in each village. The Namruke image, known as Fatu, is largely hidden below ground (as befits the Namruke character); the Kawiameta image (Sura), on the other hand, is much taller, with very little of it below ground (again befitting the more "obvious" character of Kawiameta people).

Whatever the situation might have been in the past—see Capell's comment that membership was matrilineally inherited—these moieties today are clearly patrilineal descent groups, with land, chiefly titles, and magical instruments passing from father to (usually) oldest son. If a man has only daughters, these rights pass through the (oldest) daughter to her (oldest) son.

Over time, cross-moiety marriage took place, giving rise to a third *vaka*, the Fana. A Fana person is supposed to have personality traits of both Namruke and Kawiameta, and they act as intermediaries between the two other *vaka* in cases of disputes and the like. The Fana have no *marae*, and there are no stone images associated with them. Fana people associate, or are associated, with Namruke or Kawiameta on the basis of their personality traits rather than on the basis of the *vaka* to which their father (or mother) belongs.

The Aniwa Situation

The situation on Aniwa is similar to that on Futuna, and we will mention here only points of difference. There is a tradition that the island was originally divided into two moieties: Sura, which occupied the north of the island, and Yefatu, which occupied the south.⁷ These divisions, however, have now lapsed: The two patrilineal moieties still on Aniwa are not geographically discrete; they are now known as Kawiameta and Namrukwen, and there is a tradition of their having been borrowed from Tanna.

There are also a number of submoieties, including Tarua, Nafuci, Fakagiagi, and Ipake. Of these, Tarua is classified as Kawiameta, and people from this group claim to be the original inhabitants of Aniwa;

the other groups are classified as Namrukwen, and are said to be “outsiders,” originally from Tanna. There is apparently no group on Aniwa corresponding to Futuna’s Fana.

Who Borrowed What from Whom?

Moiety systems are of some antiquity among Oceanic-speaking peoples (see, for example, Blust 1980, 1981), and one might expect that both Tannese and Futunese-Aniwan societies would have had their own moiety systems and their own names for those moieties. Thus what is initially most striking in this comparison of Futuna-Aniwa and Tanna moiety systems is the similarity in the *names* of the moieties of the three islands:

Futuna	<i>Namruke</i>	<i>Kawiameta</i>
Aniwa	<i>Namrukwen</i>	<i>Kawiameta</i>
Tanna: Kwamera	<i>Numrukwen</i>	<i>Koiameta, Kaviameta</i>
Lenakel	<i>Numrukuen</i>	<i>Koiameta</i>
Whitesands	<i>Numrukuen</i>	<i>Koiamera</i>

Clearly, there has been contact between the islands; but the contact has been two-way in nature.

Borrowed Moiety Names

Looking at this initially as a purely linguistic problem, it would appear that the Futuna-Aniwa *names* should be treated as having been borrowed from a Tanna language. While consonant clusters and word-final consonants are rare in Futuna-Aniwa, they are common features of Tanna phonologies. Given this, the Futuna form *Namruke* with its medial consonant cluster looks “foreign,” and the Aniwa form *Namrukwen* with the final consonant looks more foreign. So the linguistic evidence would suggest that the moiety names are Tannese and have been borrowed into Futuna-Aniwa, and this accords with the Aniwa tradition of borrowing these groupings from Tanna.

The most likely source of these loans is Kwamera. On the east coast of Tanna, which faces Futuna and Aniwa, three languages are spoken: North Tanna, Whitesands, and Kwamera. Whitesands has undergone a regular **t > r* sound change, and one of its moiety names is *Koiamera*, an unlikely source for the Futuna-Aniwa form *Kawiameta*. (North Tanna has undergone a similar change.) Kwamera has two alternate names for this moiety, *Koiameta* and *Kaviameta*, the latter being the

closest of all Tanna moiety names to the Futuna-Aniwa form. We can therefore refine the hypothesis and propose that the Futuna-Aniwa moiety names were borrowed from Kwamera.

A Borrowed Moiety System

However, Futuna has no tradition of these moieties' having been introduced from outside: Capell's statement quoted above makes no mention of this, and though incomplete information was made available to him (or Gunn), it seems clear that the moiety *system* in Futuna has always "been there." While Aniwa does have a tradition of borrowing the current system from Tanna, there is also knowledge of a precontact moiety system there.

We should also point to the cognation between the Aniwa moiety names *Sura* and *Yefatu* and the Futuna names for the stone images *Sura* and *Fatu*. We therefore hypothesize that Futuna, like Aniwa, always had a system of dual organization, and that *Sura* and *Fatu* are the original names of the moieties in both Futuna and Aniwa.

However, there *is* a tradition in Tanna of the moieties' having been introduced from outside. Bonnemaison in particular provides us with some valuable information on this matter. In the time of Nipróu, there was no dual organization. But then came the two *niko*, the two canoes, one of which was commanded by Mwatiktík—the *Polynesian* culture-hero Mauitikitiki. It is clear from various traditions that a dual organization was introduced to Tanna: Bonnemaison's version would suggest that this introduction had a Polynesian origin, and Futuna or Aniwa are the logical sources.

So we have reached the following conclusions:

1. Futuna-Aniwa "always" had moieties, which were known as *Sura* and *Fatu*.
2. Tanna did not always have moieties. There is distinct evidence of a moiety system having been introduced and fairly strong evidence that it came from a Polynesian source.
3. Nevertheless, the current Futuna and Aniwa names for the two moieties are borrowings from the Kwamera language of Tanna.

We thus appear to have a situation where Futunese and/or Aniwa introduced a moiety system to Tanna, and both then later borrowed the Tannese names for those moieties! This clearly requires some explanation. First, we need to look at the names of the moieties in Tanna languages, since these are not of Futuna-Aniwa origin. The Kaviameta

moiety has as its symbol the cardinal honey-eater *Myzomela cardinalis*, known as *kaviamtameta* in Kwamera,⁸ *koiametameta* in Lenakel. There is clearly a connection between the name of the bird and the name of the moiety, and it is possible that the moiety name is derived from the name of the bird that symbolizes it.

Monty Lindstrom (pers. com., 1993) has suggested that the name *Numrukwén* derives from Kwamera *rukwe-ni*, "his wife"—that is, the wife of the cardinal honey-eater. The prefix *nam-* is occasionally used to nominalize verbs and other word classes in Tanna languages, and there may have been assimilation in Kwamera and other Tanna languages from an earlier form *Namrukwén* (< *nam-rukwe-ni*)—from which the Futuna-Aniwa form would have derived—to *Numrukwén*, because of the *u* in the following syllable. Lindstrom also informs us that, although there is some reference in Tannese tradition to *Numrukwén* as the "older brother" and *Kaviameta* as the "younger brother," there are also traditions about fights between brothers in which the younger brother ends up on top, and the older brother becomes his wife.

Granted then that the Tannese attached names of their own to the borrowed moieties, why, though, did the Futunese and the Aniwas borrow Tannese names for moieties that they already had, and had names for? Let us go back to an earlier quote from Capell. He says that the missionary Gunn, "after the writing of his book . . . had learnt from some of the old men that two divisions had previously existed on Futuna. The name of one was *Namruke*, the other was not recorded. These . . . have been allowed to lapse" (Capell 1960:2).⁹ It may be, then, that the moiety system lapsed in Futuna, with the names *Sura* and *Fatu* simply being used to refer to the stones in each *marae*; it is also clear that the original *Sura/Yefatu* division in Aniwa was allowed to lapse. Subsequently, a moiety system was reactivated on both of these islands, possibly for internal reasons or possibly because of contact with Tanna. In either case, it was this contact that led to the adoption of the Kwamera names for the two moieties.

Finally, as far as the "intermediate" moiety is concerned, there does appear to be considerable similarity in the role of the *Fana* in Futuna and the *Kout kisua* in Tanna. However, there is no linguistic evidence of borrowing here, in either direction.

Conclusion

It is clear that there were far-reaching sociolinguistic contacts between Tanna and Futuna-Aniwa societies. We have shown that Tanna societies

borrowed a moiety system, probably from Futuna-Aniwa, and that Futuna-Aniwa subsequently borrowed the moiety names from the Kwamera language of Tanna. We have speculated that the original Futuna-Aniwa dual-organization system may have collapsed to a considerable extent, possibly because of the presence of Christian missionaries on the island, but that it then later regenerated, partly due to influence from Tanna.

NOTES

1. We are grateful to Monty Lindstrom and two anonymous reviewers for valuable comments on an earlier draft of this article, and to Ture Kailo for information on the Aniwan moieties.

2. The orthography generally follows the published sources on the various languages: *i* represents a mid (sometimes high) central vowel, equivalent in at least some phonetic environments to the *a* in English *ago* or the *i* in New Zealand English *this*, while the acute accent marks irregular (i.e., non-penultimate) stress. Spellings tend to vary with author: for example, Lindstrom and Lynch both write *Koiameta* for the name of one of the moieties, but Lindstrom gives *Kaviameta* as an alternate, while Guiart and Bonnemaïson (and also Lindstrom in one publication) write this name as *Koyometa*. Generally, we use the Kwamera terms for the moieties and related concepts in the text but retain other spellings in direct quotations.

3. Translation: "Two men, named Numrukwen and Koyometa, arrive in a canoe near Yatukeris (Yatukwei, Port Resolution); their canoe sinks; they take everything in the canoe and find themselves on the shore, in a rock shelter difficult of access, in the shape of two rocks, one red (*Koyometa*), the other white (*Numrukwen*)."

4. Translation: "The large majority of settlements in the rest of the island appear to be divided between the two groups. The *yimwayim* make use of the name of one or other denomination; it even often happens that leaders are divided between *Numrukwen* and *Koyometa*, within the same *yimwayim*, with informants not considering these cases aberrant." What Guiart writes as *yimwayim* is Lenakel *iimwaiimw*, Kwamera *imwarim*. This corresponds to Bislama *nakamal* and refers to a ritually important circular clearing in the forest where men prepare and drink kava, hold important decision-making meetings, prepare and carry out exchanges and feasts defined to be traditional in character, and stage traditional dances.

5. Note that Kwamera *isua* and Lenakel *asua* mean "sail, travel by sea"; hence the image of the intermediaries sailing between the two canoes.

6. Capell appears to make no mention of Fana in either of his studies. Both dictionaries give as meanings for *fana* "to shoot, a bow; a mainmast," but it appears that these meanings are not related to the name of this descent group.

7. The terms given by Capell—*Surama* and *Yefotuma*—are actually *Sura* and *Yefatu* (not *Yefotu*) with the suffix *-ma*, "and"; thus *Sura-ma* means something like "the *Sura* people." While Futuna-Aniwa *fatu* means "stone" (and also "star"), we know of no meaning for *sura* other than as the name of the moiety or moiety-stone.

8. Kwamera *kaciamtameta* derives from an unidentified root, *kavia*, plus *imtameta*, "pink, reddish."

9. The book in question may have been either *The Gospel in Futuna* or *Heralds of the Dawn*.

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THE EVOLUTION OF REGIONAL DEMOGRAPHY IN THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

L. J. Gorenflo
L.E.A.R.N.
Port Townsend, Washington

Michael J. Levin
U.S. Bureau of the Census
Washington, D.C.

Over the past 180 years, the Marshall Islands have experienced several dramatic changes as a consequence of interaction with other, more technologically advanced societies. The following essay examines one of the most important of these changes—the evolution of regional demography. Two aspects of Marshall Islands demography are emphasized here: change in the total population and change in the geographical arrangement of population. First, interaction with non-Micronesian societies and the demographic impacts of this interaction are briefly summarized. The evolving geographic distribution of population in the Marshalls is then documented, focusing on ten censuses conducted during the twentieth century and exploring the shifts in fertility, mortality, and migration that led to these changes. Finally, demographic trends are examined in terms of regional cultural ecology—revealing a decreasing correspondence between population and productivity potential coupled with a lack of systematic patterning in the regional arrangement of population—pointing up fundamental adaptive and economic challenges facing this emerging island nation.

Introduction

Of the many changes that occurred throughout Micronesia during 450 years of contact with people from outside Oceania, few have had a greater impact on native culture and society than demographic change.

The nature of this population change has differed during the course of the interaction. Due largely to diseases introduced by Westerners, early impacts tended to take the form of depopulation. Between the sixteenth and late nineteenth centuries, the populations of several places were decimated—particularly those islands that experienced the greatest contact with missionaries, explorers, whalers, and traders (Yanaihara 1940:40–45; Hezel and Berg 1979:196–197; Hezel 1983:141–149). More recently, population throughout most of Micronesia has increased, primarily due to the introduction of modern medical technology and health care during the present century. Although this resurgence usually began slowly, in many island groups the rates of demographic growth increased over time to yield populations much larger than any previously known (see Gorenflo and Levin 1991, 1992; Gorenflo 1993a, 1993b).

This essay examines one of the most dramatic cases of demographic change in Micronesia during the twentieth century—population growth in the Marshall Islands. With about 10,000 Pacific Islanders in residence as recently as 1935, by 1988 this small group of coralline islands and atolls contained more than 43,000 persons. Two changes in the demography of the Marshalls are particularly noteworthy: *population growth* throughout the area as a whole, and shifts in the *geographic distribution* of population. In the pages below, we examine the evolving demography as recorded by the ten censuses of the region (between 1920 and 1988), thus drawing upon the only reliable demographic data available for all component island units. To help understand the processes underlying change in regional demography, we examine the age structure of the populations involved, as well as supplemental data on fertility, mortality, and mobility when available. In addition, we explore ecological aspects of regional demographic change—both in terms of the correspondence between population distribution and the productivity potential of the natural environment and in terms of the evolving geographical arrangement of population over time—providing insights on the adaptive and economic challenges facing this small island nation.

A Brief Overview of Contact with Non-Micronesians

The Marshall Islands consist of twenty-nine atolls and five coral islands located between 5° and 15° north latitude, and between 161° and 173° east longitude, in the central Pacific Ocean (Bryan 1971). The Marshalls lie in two chains that run north-northwest to south-southeast: the

western Ralik or "sunset" chain, and the eastern Ratak or "sunrise" chain (Figure 1). Although colonized by migrants from the New Hebrides area as early as 3,000 years ago (Hezel 1983:3; Dye 1987:9), the Marshall Islands were unknown outside Oceania until the arrival of Spanish explorers in the early sixteenth century (Bryan 1972:173). During the 450 years that followed these initial sightings, the amount of contact between the Marshalls and more technologically advanced societies ranged from periods of complete isolation to those of extremely active colonization. Because interaction with societies from outside



FIGURE 1. The Marshall Islands.

Oceania often coincided with major population change in the Marshall Islands, we briefly summarize the history of this contact before turning to examine available demographic data.

Despite sightings and visits by Spanish ships as early as the 1520s, the Marshall Islands attracted little attention from the then rapidly expanding Spanish empire (Bryan 1972:173–177; Hezel 1983:13–35). Following a few brief visits by Spanish explorers during the mid-1560s, Europeans apparently forgot about the Marshalls. More than 200 years would pass before the reestablishment of Western contact with the Marshall Islands—through their rediscovery by a series of English naval and commercial expeditions beginning in the 1760s (Bryan 1972:177–178). Interaction between the Marshalls and outsiders was limited and sporadic throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, mostly consisting of brief visits by English and American vessels in search of food and fresh water. A pair of Russian naval expeditions led by Kotzebue during the early nineteenth century were the first to explore any of the Marshall Islands systematically, visiting several places in the Ratak chain in 1817 and again in 1824–1825 (see Kotzebue 1967, 3:140–180). The islands encountered by Kotzebue were virtually untouched by outsiders, save a few encounters with residents from other Micronesian island groups whose canoes occasionally washed up on Marshallese shores (Hezel 1983:92, 102–103).

Shortly after Kotzebue's second visit, the Marshall Islanders developed a reputation for fierceness towards outsiders, attacking several ships between the mid-1820s and the early 1850s (Hezel 1983:197–200). This reputation led most Western ships to avoid the Marshalls for several decades, excepting some whalers wishing to recuperate while on long ocean hunts (Dye 1987:11). Interaction between Euroamericans and Marshallese did not change markedly until missionary activities began in the area, with initial visits in 1852 eventually leading to the establishment of a Christian mission on Ebon Atoll five years later (Office of the Chief of Naval Operations 1943:15; Hezel 1983:201–202). Eventually, the Marshallese became less hostile to outsiders and interaction with whalers and traders increased beginning in the 1850s.

Throughout these first centuries of sporadic contact, visitors to the Marshall Islands recorded little information on demography, with the exception of population estimates for certain places during the early and mid-nineteenth century (see Krämer and Nevermann 1938:172–174). Population levels received careful attention from the natives themselves, and most Marshallese families practiced infanticide after the birth of a third child (Kotzebue 1967, 3:173; Pollock 1975:257–258).

Warfare also served to reduce population, the few conflicts with people from other island groups such as Kiribati (Office of the Chief of Naval Operations 1943:30) overshadowed by incessant warfare between rival Marshallese factions (Kotzebue 1967, 3:166–167, 170–172; Kiste 1974: 4; Hezel 1983:92–94, 209). Marshall Islanders were very mobile during traditional times, though movement both within the Marshalls as well as to other places (e.g., Kiribati and Kosrae) tended to be temporary (see Office of the Chief of Naval Operations 1944:22; Hezel 1983:201–203). Certain activities of outsiders also affected Marshall Islands demography. “Blackbirding,” as well as more legitimate types of labor recruitment, occurred in several places during the 1860s and 1870s (e.g., Ailinglapalap Atoll; see Hezel 1983:237–240). Population was also affected by natural disasters such as the tidal wave that struck Ujelang Atoll sometime before 1870, killing an unknown number and forcing all survivors to relocate to Jaluit Atoll (Naval Intelligence Division 1945:412).

The greatest demographic impacts during the first centuries of contact with non-Micronesians, however, resulted from diseases introduced from outside Micronesia. For those few portions of the Marshalls where details on introduced diseases exist, one encounters a grim story. For example, Ebon Atoll suffered through successive waves of influenza (1859), measles *and* influenza (1861), typhoid (1863), and amoebic dysentery (throughout the 1870s)—each illness taking an unknown number of lives (Office of the Chief of Naval Operations 1943:70; Rynkiewicz 1972:29, 169; Hezel 1983:206). Smallpox also swept through the Marshalls during the second half of the nineteenth century, killing untold numbers, while gonorrhea and syphilis became widespread problems likely affecting both mortality and fertility (see Hezel 1983: 141–149). As a result of these several factors, the population declined by an unknown amount between Kotzebue’s first visit and the late 1870s—with much of the depopulation probably occurring after 1860, corresponding to increased interaction with outsiders.

Sustained, widespread contact between Europeans and Marshall Islanders began in the late nineteenth century, when the Marshalls became a German colony. German entrepreneurs established a permanent trading station on Ebon Atoll in the early 1860s to compete with Portuguese, English, and American traders in the region (Office of the Chief of Naval Operations 1943:14; Mason 1946:8, 62). Over the ensuing two decades, Germany’s trading activities grew substantially throughout the region (see Hezel 1983:210–226). The German grip on trade tightened in 1878 when a treaty with local chiefs guaranteed pro-

tection to German trading companies in the Ralik chain, as well as exclusive rights to use the harbor at Jaluit Atoll (Office of the Chief of Naval Operations 1943:12; Firth 1977:7; Hezel 1983:298–299; Shinn 1984:334). In 1885 Germany signed a treaty with the paramount chiefs of the Marshalls, in essence annexing the entire region (Fischer and Fischer 1957:36). Spain formally ceded sovereignty to Germany in 1886 (Office of the Chief of Naval Operations 1943:12), and the Marshall Islands officially became a German protectorate (Mason 1946:62–63; Firth 1977:15–16).

Germany developed the Marshalls economically, primarily through the promotion of copra production and trade (Office of the Chief of Naval Operations 1943:14–15; Kiste 1974:13). But the Germans generally approached their various administrative tasks indirectly, administering the Marshalls through the traditional authority structure of the Marshallese culture (see Office of the Chief of Naval Operations 1943:13; Oliver 1961:348–350; Kiste 1974:13; Firth 1977:16). This strategy required the actual presence of relatively few German citizens (Peattie 1988:154), most of whom lived at the newly established administrative center on Jaluit Atoll. Nevertheless, changes in Marshallese demography occurred during the period of German rule, as the native population continued to decline at least through the 1890s. Diseases remained the main culprits, with tuberculosis (arriving in 1879), chicken pox (introduced in 1887), influenza (particularly the epidemics of 1895 and 1904), dysentery, and measles (notably the major outbreak in 1905–1906) all killing “considerable numbers” of natives (Office of the Chief of Naval Operations 1943:69; see also Steinbach 1893; Erdland 1914:17; Krämer and Nevermann 1938:172). Warfare between native factions persisted into the 1880s, though the number of deaths directly resulting from war continued to be minimal (see Krämer and Nevermann 1938:204; Hezel 1983:293–295). Natural disasters also contributed to increased mortality, primarily from a pair of typhoons that devastated several southern atolls in 1905 and caused the death of many islanders both directly and indirectly (through ensuing famine and disease) (Jeschke 1905; Krämer and Nevermann 1938:172; Office of the Chief of Naval Operations 1943:19; Spoehr 1949:17; Hezel 1991:255–256).

Roughly fifty years of German presence in the Marshall Islands ended in 1914 when Japanese military forces occupied the region (see Hezel and Berg 1979:436–475; Peattie 1988:42). Motivated in part by economic interests rooted in late-nineteenth-century trade (Peattie 1988:16), Japan’s presence remained largely military until 1918 when the

Civil Department of the Naval Administration took over (Office of the Chief of Naval Operations 1943:13). Japanese authority throughout Micronesia obtained international recognition in 1920 through a Class C League of Nations mandate (Clyde [1935] 1967), with the Marshalls forming the *Jaluit District* of the Mandated Territory.¹ The Japanese took a particularly active interest in the region, in part hoping to develop the economic potential of the Marshalls. To achieve this aim, the Japanese leadership administered the area more directly—undermining the traditional authority structure in the process (Office of the Chief of Naval Operations 1943:13). The copra industry flourished under the Japanese, leading to important changes in village life to meet increasing demands for labor (Peattie 1988:101, 121). Japan also saw great military value in the Marshalls' geographical placement and as potential locations for airfields (Peattie 1988:231–232). Despite the number of changes in the Marshall Islands during thirty years of Japanese administration, the native population remained relatively constant. Prior to the buildup associated with World War II, the greatest demographic changes consisted of the occasional relocation of islanders to provide labor. A major typhoon in 1918 caused many deaths (more than 200 on Majuro Atoll alone), as well as considerable disruption of food and copra production (Spoehr 1949:21; Rynkiewicz 1981:31). Relatively few Japanese nationals migrated to the Marshall Islands prior to the war, other than to Jaluit Atoll, largely because of the limited resources of atoll and coral-island environments (Peattie 1988: 158, 186).

With the preparation for war, life in the Marshall Islands changed markedly. The Japanese swept entire villages for laborers to work on construction projects throughout the district, particularly to construct airfields on Kwajalein, Majuro, and Wotje atolls beginning in 1939 (Mason 1946:9; Peattie 1988:251–252). When war began, Japan sent many troops to the Marshalls—their numbers reaching roughly 13,000 by the end of 1943 (Peattie 1988:263; see Cowl and Love 1955:207). American forces bombarded those atolls that contained Japanese bases, including Enewetak, Kwajalein, Jaluit, Maloelap, Mili, and Wotje (Shaw, Nalty, and Turnbladh 1966:216–219; Peattie 1988:271, 279, 305); although U.S. forces landed only on the first two (along with Majuro Atoll) in early 1944, destruction was substantial and many islanders undoubtedly died (see Carucci 1989:83–85; Hezel 1991:269). In addition, late in the war Japanese forces killed hundreds of Marshallese on Jaluit, Maloelap, Mili, and Wotje atolls, apparently as punishment for acts against the Japanese war effort (Heine 1979; see Hezel

1991:274–275). Hardships continued in the wake of the attacks, as resident Japanese soldiers and natives faced starvation on islands and atolls cut off from supply lines (Peattie 1988:305). Only those places excluded from the Japanese military effort escaped such trials, the major change during the war years usually comprising a return to subsistence agriculture and fishing from copra production. Japan's administration of the Marshall Islands ended when it surrendered to allied forces in September 1945. Between 1920 and 1935 the number of Pacific Islanders living in the Marshalls remained about 10,000 persons; the number of Marshallese decreased during the war, though by an unknown amount.

Unquestionably the most dramatic demographic and cultural changes in the Marshall Islands occurred during the extended American presence in the region following World War II (see Gale 1978; Alexander 1984). For the first six years after their capture from the Japanese, a military government under the U.S. Navy administered the Marshalls. In 1947 the islands became part of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI)—a strategic territory established by the United Nations, with the United States named as “administering authority” (Shinn 1984:303). The American government introduced several cultural changes to the Marshall Islands, including widespread democracy, a cash economy, improved health care, Western education, and increasing amounts of modern amenities. Among the more dramatic demographic changes during the American presence in the area was the relocation of entire populations from Bikini and Enewetak atolls during the late 1940s to enable nuclear testing (Mason 1954; Kiste 1968, 1974, 1977; Tobin 1967). But perhaps the most significant, long-term impact of the American presence was the steady population growth that occurred throughout most of the Marshall Islands—particularly on Majuro Atoll and on the islet of Ebeye in Kwajalein Atoll (Alexander 1978; Heine 1984; Gorenflo and Levin 1989). Due largely to the availability of improved health care introduced by the United States, both fertility and survivability increased through 1980. The population of the region roughly tripled during the same time period.

In May 1979 the Marshall Islands became a self-governing republic, as a first step towards reestablishing independence (Shinn 1984:332). The Republic of the Marshall Islands and the United States ultimately agreed to a Compact of Free Association between their two nations, enacted in January 1986. Despite growing Marshallese political autonomy, strong U.S. influence in the region persists—particularly through continued activities at the U.S. military installation on Kwajalein Atoll and the large amount of money that the United States pays for the use of

that facility and to support development under the compact (Mason 1987:23–24). The Republic of the Marshall Islands conducted a census in late 1988, the first since the reestablishment of self-rule (Republic of the Marshall Islands 1989). Results of this census indicate a continuation of the rapid population growth experienced throughout the period of U.S. administration, along with a continued concentration of people at the urban centers of Majuro and Ebeye.

Changing Regional Demography in the Marshall Islands

Little demographic data exist for the Marshall Islands prior to 1920, the year that the Japanese Nan'yō-chō (South Seas Bureau) conducted the first systematic census of the Mandated Territory. Population data are available from as early as 1800 for certain atolls, initially collected by various explorers and missionaries, and later by German administrators in the region (see Krämer and Nevermann 1938:172–174). But demographic data preceding 1920 usually comprise estimates prepared at irregular dates; due largely to the constant flow of islanders between places (Krämer and Nevermann 1938:172), coupled with the geographical extent of the Marshalls, no single set of estimates covered all island units at one particular time (Table 1). Most figures place Marshall Islands population between 10,000 and 13,000 persons at the onset of German presence in the 1870s (see Hager 1889:33; Office of the Chief of Naval Operations 1943:19), with estimates ranging from 7,000 to 16,000 (Finsch 1893:123; Krämer and Nevermann 1938:172; Yanaihara 1940:44). Official German figures of 9,267 in 1909, 9,163 in 1911, and 9,546 in 1913 (Yanaihara 1940:44) probably are the first *reasonably* accurate estimates of population in the Marshalls.

To date, agencies from different governments have conducted ten systematic censuses of the Marshall Islands: four by the Japanese Nan'yō-chō (1920, 1925, 1930, and 1935), two by the TTPI administration (1958 and 1973), one jointly by the Peace Corps and the University of Hawaii School of Public Health (1967), two by the U.S. Bureau of the Census (1970 and 1980), and one by the Republic of the Marshall Islands Office of Planning and Statistics (1988). Table 2 presents the total populations of the Marshalls recorded by these ten censuses, supplemented in the post-World War II years by population estimates prepared by various U.S. government agencies. Two trends in the overall population are apparent: a relatively constant population of approximately 10,000 Pacific Islanders from 1920 through 1935 (until 1948, if

TABLE 1. Early Population Estimates for the Marshall Islands

Area	1800	1817	1860 ^a	1878	1880 ^b	1895	1900	1903	1906	1907	1910
Marshall Islands			10,460								
Ralik Chain			4,670								
Ailinginae			-								
Ailinglapalap			200		220						
Bikar			-								
Bikini			50		30						
Ebon			1,000		1,000		1,000		2,000		
Enewetak			30		40	<60			35		
Jabat			50		26				50		
Jaluit			500	1,006	700	1,100				955	
Kwajalein	210		100		200						
Lae			500		200				200		169
Lib			50		55				25		
Namorik			400		400						
Namu			50		150						
Rongelap			120		18				18		
Rongrik			80		10						20
Taongi			-								
Ujae			500		300				200		
Ujelang			1,000	6					-		
Wotho			40		25				30		
Ratak Chain			5,790								
Ailuk			200		200						
Arno			1,000		1,000	>1,000	1,000		1,600		

Aur	1,000	1,000	300
Erikub	3		30
Jemo	200		
Kili	-		
Likiep	300	1,000	19
Majuro	1,000	1,000	1,900
Maloelap	1,000	1,000	
Mejit	50	50	
Mili	700	700	700
Taka	20		
Utrik	20	40	25
Wotje	100	300	350

Sources: Gulick 1862; Krämer and Nevermann 1938; Witt 1881; Kuhn 1882; Hager 1889; Jeschke 1906; Hermann 1909; Spennemann 1992.

Notes: Certain population figures, as well as dates, are approximations. Middle values are presented for population figures listed as ranges. Empty cells signify unavailable data. For all tables, "-" denotes zero or a percentage that rounds to less than 0.1; "NA" = not available; "..." = not applicable.

^aGulick (1862:358-361) provides no dates for his population estimates. Although he does note that his data on geographical location, native island name, and population are "the result of eight years' research" (Gulick 1862:358)—thus *possibly* pushing his demographic figures to the early 1850s—many of the figures have other years associated, though their association with population (as opposed to the date of an earlier visit) is unclear. Given the uncertainty of Gulick's estimates and the 1862 date of their publication, we have listed them under 1860 to provide a basic point of reference.

^bMost of the 1880 figures presented in this table come from Krämer and Nevermann (1938:172-174). Although those authors provided no source for their 1880 data, it appears that most came from Hager (1889:35-53), who in turn acquired his data from Witt or Kuhn. The uncanny agreement between the 1860 and 1880 estimates for eight island units in the Ratak chain and two island units in the Ralik chain suggests that Gulick (1862:358-361) may ultimately have been their origin, though neither Witt nor Kuhn cite Gulick's work. Note that Witt (1881:527-533) provides different population figures for Ebon (1,200), Lae (250), Ailuk (120), and Majuro (1,500) than presented above. Although the dates of these and other figures from Witt are uncertain, they probably come from about 1880. Kuhn (1882:147-152) provides different population figures for Ebon (1,200-1,300), Arno (3,000), and Majuro (3,000) than presented above. His estimates date between May and June 1881.

one considers official estimates), followed by sustained, often rapid population growth from the 1958 census onward (Figure 2).²

Closer examination of available data reveals that in addition to an increase in the total population of the Marshall Islands over time, shifts in the regional distribution of population also occurred—with some atolls becoming relatively more important demographically and others becoming relatively less important. Table 3 presents evidence of these regional demographic changes for the ten census years of interest. Complementing data on the number of inhabitants are changing population densities throughout the Marshalls (Table 4). These two tables provide much of the foundation for the remainder of this study. We now briefly explore the changing regional demography of the Marshalls, organized within seven sections: one examining the Japanese period, considering the censuses of 1920 through 1935, when the regional demography of the area was fairly constant; and one section for each of the remaining six censuses (1958, 1967, 1970, 1973, 1980, and 1988), when the greatest changes in regional demography occurred. Limitations of space preclude detailed discussions of each census period; rather, we confine ourselves to a presentation of relevant data, pointing out significant demographic shifts and potential causes of population change when possible.

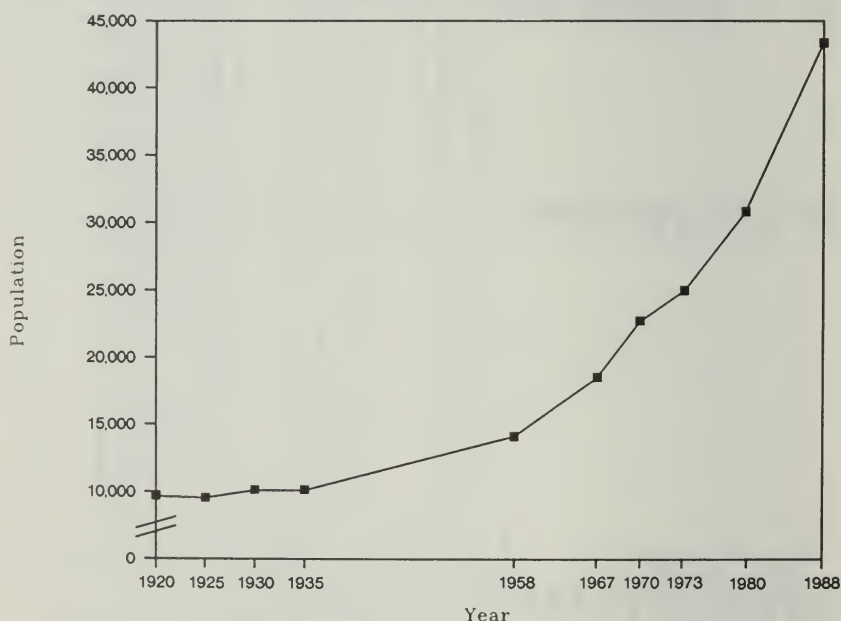


FIGURE 2. Change in the Marshall Islands population over time (1920, 1925, 1930, and 1935 data are for Pacific Islanders only).

TABLE 2. Population of the Marshall Islands by Year, Showing
Population Change between Census Years: Select Years

Year	Population	Change from Previous Listed Census Yr.	Average Annual Change from Previous Listed Census Yr.	Source
1909	9,267	...	...	Yanaihara 1940
1911	9,163	...	...	Yanaihara 1940
1913	9,546	...	...	Yanaihara 1940
1920	9,693	...	...	Nan'yō-chō 1937
1925	9,538	-155	-0.3%	Nan'yō-chō 1927
1930	10,130	592	1.2%	Nan'yō-chō 1931
1935	10,126	-4	-	Nan'yō-chō 1937
1945	9,471	...	...	Dean 1947
1948	10,495	...	...	U.S. Dept. of the Navy 1948
1949	10,802	...	...	U.S. Dept. of the Navy 1949
1950	11,033	...	...	U.S. Dept. of the Navy 1950
1951	11,299	...	...	U.S. Dept. of the Navy 1951
1954	11,878	...	...	U.S. Dept. of State 1956
1955	14,260	...	...	U.S. Dept. of State 1956
1956	13,984	...	...	U.S. Dept. of State 1957
1957	13,231	...	...	U.S. Dept. of State 1958
1958	14,163	4,037	1.5%	Office of the High Commissioner 1959
1959	14,290	...	...	U.S. Dept. of State 1960
1960	14,907	...	...	U.S. Dept. of State 1961
1961	15,399	...	...	U.S. Dept. of State 1962
1962	15,710	...	...	U.S. Dept. of State 1963
1963	17,363	...	...	U.S. Dept. of State 1964
1964	18,205	...	...	U.S. Dept. of State 1965
1965	18,062	...	...	U.S. Dept. of State 1966
1966	18,239	...	...	U.S. Dept. of State 1968
1967	18,578	4,415	3.1%	School of Public Health n.d.
1968	18,998	...	...	U.S. Dept. of State 1969
1969	19,328	...	...	U.S. Dept. of State 1970
1970	22,888	4,310	7.2%	U.S. Bureau of the Census 1972
1971	23,166	...	...	U.S. Dept. of State 1972
1972	24,248	...	...	U.S. Dept. of State 1973
1973	25,045	2,157	3.0%	Office of Census Coordinator 1975
1975	26,569	...	...	U.S. Dept. of State 1977
1977	25,457	...	...	U.S. Dept. of State 1979
1980	30,873	5,828	3.0%	U.S. Bureau of the Census 1983a
1981	32,104	...	...	U.S. Dept. of State 1984
1982	33,339	...	...	U.S. Dept. of State 1984
1984	34,923	...	...	U.S. Dept. of State 1985
1988	43,380	12,507	4.3%	Republic of the Marshall Islands 1989

Notes: Census years in boldface. Data for 1920–1935 are for Pacific Islanders only. Inter-censal estimates are *de jure* population; census data are *de facto* population.

TABLE 3. Population by Area: Census Years

Island Unit	1920	1925	1930	1935	1958	1967	1970	1973	1980	1988
Marshall Islands	9,693	9,538	10,130	10,126	14,163	18,578 ^a	22,888	25,045 ^b	30,873	43,380
Ralik Chain	4,919	4,778	5,308	5,292	6,644	8,732	12,159	10,692	13,684	17,502
Ailinglapalap	678	712	684	694	1,288 ^c	1,195 ^c	1,106 ^c	1,100	1,385	1,715
Bikini	152	90	127	159	-	-	-	75	-	10
Ebon	787	552	602	649	819	836	575	740	887	741
Enewetak	104	96	149	128	-	-	-	-	542	715
Jabat	NA	75	48	39	NA	NA	NA	70	72	112
Jaluit	1,680	1,885	2,141	1,989	1,098	1,113	492	925	1,450	1,709
Kili	NA	17	32	27	267	NA	281	360	489	602
Kwajalein	469	395	438	500	1,284	3,540 ^d	7,818	5,469	6,624	9,311
Lae	129	82	79	88	165	131	173	154	237	319
Lib	NA	49	73	68	44	142	103	98	98	115
Namorik	382	331	399	378	523	547	367	431	617	814
Namu	232	239	254	271	482	597	565	493	654	801
Rongelap	113	66	92	92	264	189	144	165	235	-
Rongrik	NA	13	11	6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ujae	119	109	143	117	167	191	178	209	309	448
Ujelang	NA	20	11	40	172	251	302	342	-	-
Wotho	74	47	25	47	71	NA	55	61	85	90

Ratak Chain	4,774	4,760	4,822	4,834	7,519	9,758	10,729	14,334	17,189	25,878
Ailuk	538	266	304	285	419	384	341	335	413	488
Arno	1,197	990	1,055	942	1,037	1,273	874	1,120	1,487	1,656
Aur	300	251	252	278	241	361	315	300	444	438
Likiep	293	435	467	495	636	430	245	406	481	482
Majuro	526	685	753	779	3,415	5,249	7,401	10,290	11,791	19,664
Maloelap	550	608	446	484	454	494	421	432	614	796
Mejit	443	399	318	324	346	320	228	271	325	445
Mili	523	613	548	523	412	582	327	538	763	854
Utrik	NA	155	145	134	198	269	220	217	336	409
Wotje	404	358	534	590	361	396	357	425	535	646

Sources: Nan'yō-chō 1927, 1931, 1937; Office of the High Commissioner 1959; School of Public Health n.d.; U.S. Bureau of the Census 1972, 1983a; Office of Census Coordinator 1975; Republic of the Marshall Islands 1989.

^a1967 total includes populations for Kili Island and Wotho Atoll (not enumerated), other islands "not specified," and 19 individuals whose residence was "not specified."

^b1973 total includes 19 individuals whose residence was "not specified."

^cIncludes population of Jabat Island.

^dEbeye only; data for the remainder of Kwajalein Atoll unavailable.

TABLE 4. Population Density by Area: Census Years (Persons per Square Mile)

Island Unit	1920	1925	1930	1935	1958	1967	1970	1973	1980	1988
Marshall Islands	139	137	145	145	207	283	348	381	470	660
Ralik Chain	137	133	147	147	191	274	381	335	429	549
Ailinglapalap	120	126	121	122	227	211	195	194	244	302
Bikini	66	39	55	69	-	-	-	32	-	4
Ebon	355	249	271	292	369	377	259	333	400	334
Enewetak	46	42	66	57	-	-	-	-	240	316
Jabat	NA	341	218	177	NA	NA	NA	318	327	509
Jaluit	384	430	489	454	251	254	112	211	331	390
Kili	NA	47	89	75	742	NA	781	1,000	1,358	1,672
Kwajalein ^a	74	62	69	79	254	1,603	3,541	2,477	3,000	4,217
Lae	230	146	141	157	295	234	309	275	423	570
Lib	NA	136	203	189	122	394	286	272	272	319
Namorik	357	309	373	353	489	511	343	403	577	761
Namu	96	99	105	112	199	247	233	204	270	331
Rongelap	37	21	30	30	86	62	47	54	77	-
Rongrik	NA	20	17	9	NA	NA	-	-	-	-
Ujae	165	151	199	163	232	265	247	290	429	622
Ujelang	NA	30	16	60	257	375	451	510	-	-
Wotho	44	28	15	28	43	NA	33	37	51	54

Ratak Chain	141	141	143	143	222	289	317	424	508	765
Ailuk	260	129	147	138	202	186	165	162	200	236
Arno	239	198	211	188	207	255	175	224	297	331
Aur	138	116	116	128	111	166	145	138	205	202
Likiep	74	110	118	125	161	109	62	103	121	122
Majuro	149	194	213	220	965	1,483	2,091	2,907	3,331	5,555
Maloelap	145	160	118	128	120	130	111	114	162	210
Mejit	615	554	442	450	481	444	317	376	451	618
Mili	91	106	95	91	71	101	57	93	132	148
Utrik	NA	165	154	143	211	286	234	231	357	435
Wotje	128	113	169	187	114	125	113	134	169	204

*Calculations account for U.S. government restrictions, beginning in the early 1950s, against the use of certain portions of the atoll as places of residence for natives—thus reducing the area available for habitation.

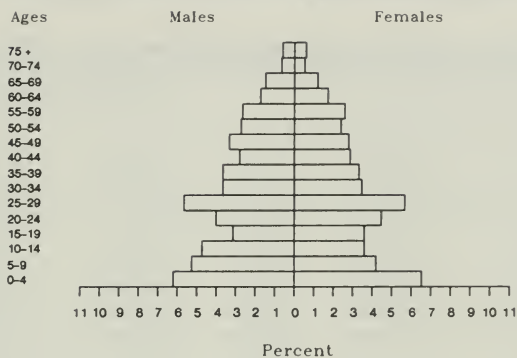
*Regional Demography during Japanese Administration:
1920, 1925, 1930, and 1935*

The population of the Marshall Islands was about 10,000 Pacific Islanders between 1920 and 1935 (Nan'yō-chō 1927, 1931, 1937; see Table 2).³ With minor exceptions, the regional distribution of population living on particular islands and atolls (hereafter called "island units") remained relatively constant as well. In broad geographic terms, roughly equal numbers of Pacific Islanders lived in the Ralik and Ratak chains (see Table 3). Closer examination of regional trends reveals that slight growth occurred on some atolls, such as Jaluit, Likiep, Majuro, and Wotje—with Jaluit continuing as the main commercial and administrative center. Slight decreases in population occurred on other island units, including Ailuk, Arno, and Ebon atolls.

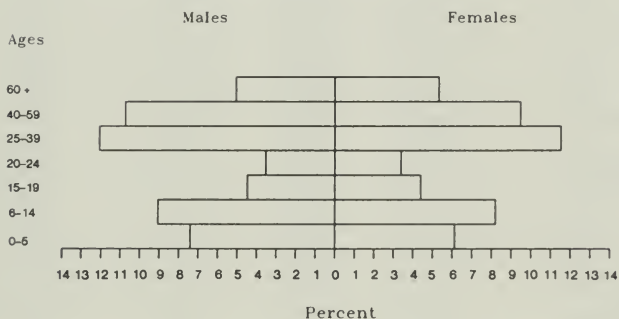
Data on the age composition of the Marshall Islands as a whole are available for 1925, 1930, and 1935. The large age groups employed for the latter two years, and the use of different age groups for the three census years, limit the comparability of these data. Nevertheless, general comparisons can be made through aggregating age groups—once again indicating slight fluctuations within a framework of a basically constant population (Figure 3). Between 1925 and 1935, we note in particular minor decreases in the proportion of individuals aged 14 and younger, and a slight increase in individuals aged 60 and older. The median age remained relatively constant over this ten-year period, increasing from 27.2 years in 1925 (calculated for the Jaluit District of the Mandated Territory) to 27.5 years in 1930, and then decreasing to 26.9 years in 1935.

Data on the age composition of individual island units are available for 1930 and 1935. Compared to data for the Marshall Islands as a whole in 1930, the Ralik chain contained proportionally more individuals younger than 25 years and proportionally fewer aged 60 years and older (Table 5). The age composition of individual island units in 1930 varied considerably. The demographic structure of some units (e.g., Ebon and Jaluit atolls) were broadly similar to that of the Ralik chain as a whole, while the composition of others was quite different—though much of the variability present in this year (and 1935) no doubt was a product of the small populations on many of the island units concerned. Compared to the Marshalls as a whole, data from the Ratak chain in 1930 indicate relatively fewer individuals aged 24 years and younger, and relatively more aged 60 years and older, due largely to the heavy representation of older individuals on Arno and Majuro atolls.

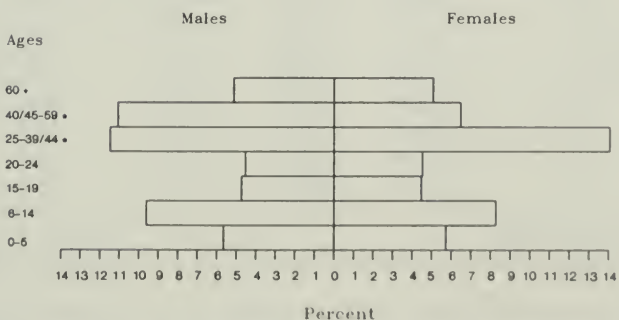
Age and Sex Distribution, Marshall Islands: 1925



Age and Sex Distribution, Marshall Islands: 1930



Age and Sex Distribution, Marshall Islands: 1935



*DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS USED FOR MALES (25-39, 40-59) AND FEMALES (25-44, 45-59)

FIGURE 3. Population pyramids (Pacific Islanders only, excluding Enewetak and Ujelang atolls): 1925, 1930, 1935.

TABLE 5. Pacific Islander Population by Age and Area: 1930

Island Unit	Total Persons	Age Group (Percentage)			
		<15	15-24	25-59	60+
Marshall Islands	10,130	30.6	15.5	43.6	10.4
Ralik Chain	5,308	31.8	17.6	42.8	7.9
Ailinglapalap	684	28.1	18.6	44.3	9.1
Bikini	127	49.6	13.4	28.3	8.7
Ebon	602	30.9	14.8	44.7	9.6
Enewetak	149	34.2	17.4	40.9	7.4
Jabat	48	29.2	12.5	50.0	8.3
Jaluit	2,141	33.5	17.7	43.2	5.6
Kili	32	9.4	25.0	62.5	3.1
Kwajalein	438	29.0	19.2	38.6	13.2
Lae	79	35.4	16.5	43.0	5.1
Lib	73	38.4	6.8	49.3	5.5
Namorik	399	25.8	19.5	45.1	9.5
Namu	254	35.8	20.9	35.4	7.9
Rongelap	92	37.0	17.4	35.9	9.8
Rongrik	11	9.1	9.1	81.8	—
Ujae	143	30.8	15.4	46.9	7.0
Ujelang	11	9.1	45.5	45.5	—
Wotho	25	16.0	16.0	36.0	32.0
Ratak Chain	4,822	29.3	13.1	44.4	13.1
Ailuk	304	31.9	13.8	44.1	10.2
Arno	1,055	22.5	11.9	48.4	17.2
Aur	252	31.3	16.3	46.4	6.0
Likiep	467	34.0	17.3	41.3	7.3
Majuro	753	23.0	13.1	37.3	26.6
Maloelap	446	32.5	14.1	46.9	6.5
Mejit	318	31.1	11.6	50.9	6.3
Mili	548	21.4	13.1	48.7	16.8
Utrik	145	35.9	15.2	44.1	4.8
Wotje	534	48.1	9.4	38.2	4.3

Source: Nan'yō-chō 1931.

Note: Percentages in this and following tables may not sum precisely to 100% due to rounding.

The 1935 data suggest basic similarities with the 1930 data: The Ralik chain contained relatively more individuals aged 24 years and younger and relatively fewer aged 60 years and older than the Marshalls as a whole, with the opposite true for the Ratak chain (Table 6). Variability in the age composition of individual island units continued in 1935.

A limited number of vital statistics from the period of Japanese rule

TABLE 6. Pacific Islander Population by Age and Area: 1935

Island Unit	Total Persons	Age Group (Percentage)			
		<15	15-24	25-59	60+
Marshall Islands	10,126	29.3	18.0	42.7	10.0
Ralik Chain	5,292	30.9	19.1	42.7	7.3
Ailinglapalap	694	24.4	21.2	45.7	8.8
Bikini	159	50.3	15.7	25.8	8.2
Ebon	649	27.9	17.6	46.2	8.3
Enewetak	128	37.5	14.1	39.8	8.6
Jabat	39	15.4	28.2	48.7	7.7
Jaluit	1,989	32.0	19.7	43.0	5.3
Kili	27	22.2	18.5	59.3	—
Kwajalein	500	32.4	17.4	41.4	8.8
Lae	88	33.0	19.3	38.6	9.1
Lib	68	35.3	17.6	38.2	8.8
Namorik	378	26.7	20.1	45.0	8.2
Namu	271	33.6	19.2	36.5	10.7
Rongelap	92	39.1	19.6	34.8	6.5
Rongrik	6	33.3	—	50.0	16.7
Ujae	117	31.6	15.4	42.7	10.3
Ujelang	40	20.0	27.5	52.5	—
Wotho	47	36.2	23.4	34.0	6.4
Ratak Chain	4,834	27.5	16.8	42.8	12.9
Ailuk	285	28.4	17.5	45.6	8.4
Arno	942	20.9	15.1	48.1	15.9
Aur	278	33.1	16.5	42.8	7.6
Likiep	495	32.9	22.0	38.2	6.9
Majuro	779	24.3	13.9	39.2	22.7
Maloelap	484	28.3	20.7	41.5	9.5
Mejit	324	27.2	17.0	45.4	10.5
Mili	523	17.6	17.4	49.5	15.5
Utrik	134	30.6	17.9	40.3	11.2
Wotje	590	42.2	14.4	35.9	7.5

Source: Nan'yō-chō 1937.

are available for the Marshall Islands. The crude birth rate for the Jaluit District of the Mandated Territory was 16.7 in 1925 (Japan 1926:94), increasing to an average of 17.0 between 1925 and 1929 and to 20.8 in 1935. The general fertility rate was 51.9 in 1926, 70.9 in 1929, and 98.6 in 1930. The crude death rate for the Jaluit District was 13.2 in 1925, increasing to an average of 16.7 between 1925 and 1929 and further increasing to 22.9 in 1935 (Yanaihara 1940:35, 46). At first glance, these

fertility and mortality rates provide a possible explanation of population change during the Japanese period. Fertility exceeded mortality between 1925 and 1929, with the general fertility rate showing marked increases between 1926 and 1930; as one might expect, overall population grew (by nearly 600 persons) during the last half of the 1920s. Mortality exceeded fertility in 1935, the reversal in the relationship of these two demographic mechanisms providing a possible clue for the slight population decrease between 1930 and 1935. However, upon closer examination annual births and deaths varied considerably in the Jaluit District during the Japanese administration—with births exceeding deaths one year and deaths exceeding births the next. For the years 1923–1929 and 1933–1936, average annual births exceeded average annual deaths, but by fewer than 10 individuals per year—allowing for very slow natural increase (Japan 1924–1930, 1934–1937). Only five infant (aged 2 years or less) deaths were recorded for the Jaluit District in 1935 (Japan 1937:95), suggesting that infant mortality was not a serious problem.

Additional data on fertility, mortality, and population during the Japanese administration are insufficient to explore vital rates further. The causes of the documented trends in fertility and mortality largely are open to speculation. Improved health care probably helped to reduce mortality; in turn, widespread venereal disease (see Office of the Chief of Naval Operations 1943:70) probably reduced fertility (particularly gonorrhea among women; see Morton 1966:54–60).

Limited data also exist on population mobility during the Japanese administration. As noted above, traditionally Marshall Islanders were quite mobile, a cultural practice greatly restricted by the Japanese (Office of the Chief of Naval Operations 1943:91). Movement into and out of the Marshall Islands as a whole appears to have been minimal in 1930 (Table 7). Table 7 also presents detailed data on lifetime mobility for residents of the individual island units as of 1930, as indicated by relocation after registration by the Japanese administration. Although the vast majority of individuals resided in the district where registered, nearly one-third of the population in 1930 lived at a location within the Marshalls different from their place of registration. The data show that this mobility varied greatly. Some island units that experienced notable population growth between 1920 and 1930, such as Jaluit and Likiep atolls, apparently experienced relatively heavy in-migration as well, with about half the resident populations on each originally registered elsewhere in the Marshalls. In contrast, other island units whose populations also grew considerably over the same decade, such as Majuro

TABLE 7. Pacific Islander Population by Area, According to Place of Registration: 1930

Island Unit	Total Number	Place of Registration (Percentage)			
		Same Locality	Same District ^a	Outside District ^a	Other Location ^b
Marshall Islands	10,130	65.7	33.0	0.7	0.5
Ralik Chain	5,308	59.9	38.6	1.1	0.3
Ailinglapalap	684	59.1	39.8	0.9	0.3
Bikini	127	99.2	0.8	—	—
Ebon	602	76.9	21.1	1.0	1.0
Enewetak ^c	149	63.1	31.5	5.4	—
Jabat	48	68.8	31.3	—	—
Jaluit	2,141	47.1	51.3	1.4	0.3
Kili	32	3.1	93.8	3.1	—
Kwajalein	438	65.3	34.0	0.2	0.5
Lae	79	68.4	31.6	—	—
Lib	73	—	100.0	—	—
Namorik	399	78.7	18.5	2.3	0.5
Namu	254	77.2	22.8	—	—
Rongelap	92	71.7	28.3	—	—
Rongrik	11	63.6	36.4	—	—
Ujae	143	77.6	22.4	—	—
Ujelang ^c	11	—	100.0	—	—
Wotho	25	68.0	32.0	—	—
Ratak Chain	4,822	72.2	26.8	0.3	0.7
Ailuk	304	79.6	20.4	—	—
Arno	1,055	80.3	18.7	0.2	0.5
Aur	252	75.0	25.0	—	—
Likiep	467	50.3	48.2	1.5	—
Majuro	753	83.0	15.1	—	1.9
Maloelap	446	67.3	32.1	0.7	—
Mejit	318	90.3	9.7	—	—
Mili	548	74.1	23.9	0.2	1.8
Utrik	145	78.6	21.4	—	—
Wotje	534	44.0	55.6	0.4	—

Source: Nan'yō-chō 1931.

^aRefers to major island districts within the Mandated Territory (e.g., Jaluit District, which was roughly equivalent to the Marshall Islands).

^bRefers to locations outside the Mandated Territory.

^cPart of the Pohnpei District during the Japanese administration; "same district" and "outside district" thus refer to that administrative area.

Atoll, experienced much less in-migration. Note that the data presented do not record all instances of mobility during the Japanese administration, including most instances of short-term migration. Temporary relocations of 100 to 225 Marshallese laborers annually to the sugar plantations of Saipan occurred during the early 1920s (Office of the Chief of Naval Operations 1943:102). Increased labor recruitment occurred late in the Japanese administration, often for military-related construction projects but also for economic purposes (see Kiste 1974:18–19), though such mobility once again generally involved short periods. Actual militarization, in contrast, often brought about long-term relocation—such as the evacuation of all natives from Taroa Islet in Wotje Atoll to allow a military buildup (Office of the Chief of Naval Operations 1943:20). The other three Japanese censuses unfortunately did not record data on residence by place of registration or other indicators of mobility.

Regional Demography in 1958

Japan's involvement in World War II interrupted the systematic collection of demographic data in the Marshall Islands. Regrettably, the next census of the Marshalls was not conducted until 1958 (Office of the High Commissioner 1959). In contrast to the relatively constant population during the period of Japanese administration, a number of changes occurred during the twenty-three years preceding the 1958 census. Most notable were a substantial increase in population and the beginning of major shifts in the age composition of the region.

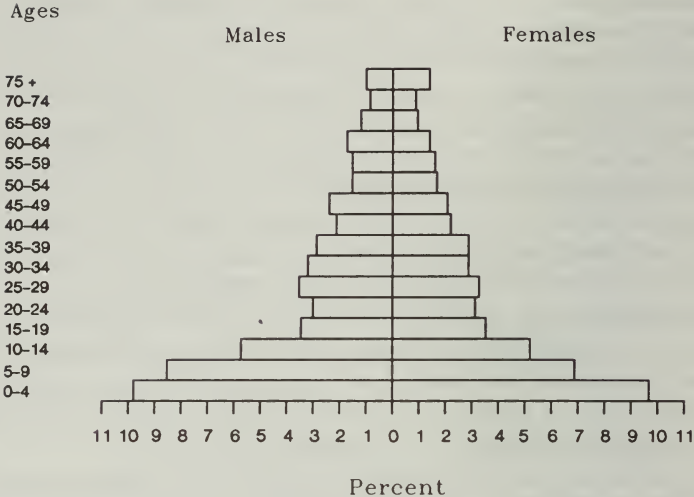
Between the 1935 and 1958 censuses, the population grew by nearly 40 percent. This growth represents an average annual increase of about 1.5 percent, which is not extraordinarily rapid. However, demographic estimates for the Marshalls shortly after World War II indicate that significant population growth probably did not begin until the late 1940s (see Table 2), suggesting that a much more substantial average annual rate of growth (2.8 percent) occurred over the decade preceding the 1958 census. Both island chains saw their respective populations grow, with the increase experienced in the Ratak chain particularly notable (see Table 3). Different trends in local population change also emerged. Most island units gained population between 1935 and 1958, particularly Ailinglapalap, Kwajalein, Ujelang, and Majuro atolls. The increases on Kwajalein and Majuro atolls deserve special attention, not only because of the growth experienced, but also because of dramatic increases in population density (see Table 4). In addition to a substantial increase in population by 1958, the high population density on Kwaja-

lein Atoll in part was due to the establishment of Kwajalein Islet, the largest islet in the atoll, as a U.S. military installation beginning in 1951—removing it as a potential location of Marshallese residence (Tobin 1954). The majority of the indigenous Kwajalein Atoll population has lived on the small islet of Ebeye since 1951, subjecting most residents to densities appreciably greater than those calculated for the remaining portions of the atoll (see Gorenflo and Levin 1989). Majuro Atoll also played special roles at the end of World War II, both as the location of a U.S. government installation (first a U.S. naval base, then the headquarters of the U.S. Navy Civil Government for the southern Marshalls) and as a destination for Marshallese evacuated from other atolls because of the war (Spoehr 1949:28–30, 43–44). Although evacuees were repatriated shortly after the war, the emerging role of Majuro Atoll as the center of Marshall Islands government and dealings with the United States, as well as the location of commercial activities and Western amenities such as a modern school (Hezel 1991:278), was important in attracting large numbers of Marshallese from elsewhere.

In contrast to places that experienced population growth, some island units lost people between 1935 and 1958. The greatest depopulation occurred on Jaluit Atoll, the former German and Japanese administrative center. This atoll suffered heavy damage during the war; despite efforts to reestablish some of Jaluit's prewar regional importance, by 1958 it had not rebounded to population levels documented in 1935 (see Connell 1983:16). The U.S. government evacuated Bikini and Enewetak atolls during this period, relocating their inhabitants to enable nuclear tests during the late 1940s (Hines 1962:20–49, 78–111). The U.S. Navy moved inhabitants of Bikini first to Rongrik Atoll (March 1946), then to Kwajalein Atoll (March 1948), and eventually to Kili Island (November 1948) (Mason 1954; Kiste 1974:30–34, 88, 103). The inhabitants of Enewetak, in turn, were relocated to Ujelang Atoll (December 1947), thus accounting for the demographic growth on Ujelang documented by the 1958 census (Hines 1962:81; see Tobin 1967).

Accompanying the overall growth in Marshall Islands population between 1935 and 1958 was a substantial change in its age composition (Figure 4). This change is evident particularly among younger persons: In contrast to prewar statistics, when the median age hovered around 27 years, the median age in 1958 was 18.3 years (TTPI citizens only) (U.S. Department of State 1981:8). Given the growing representation of young persons in the Marshall Islands, it is likely that increased fertility was responsible for much of the population growth. Unfortunately, we have available no reliable vital statistics or mobility data with which

Age and Sex Distribution, Marshall Islands: 1958



Age and Sex Distribution, Marshall Islands: 1967

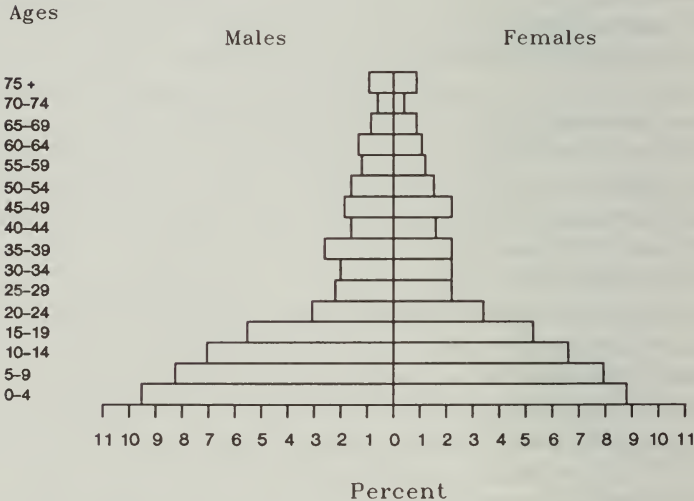


FIGURE 4. Population pyramids: 1958, 1967.

to explore the causes of demographic change that followed World War II.

Regional Demography in 1967

Population growth continued between 1958 and 1967—the average annual rate of change during this period increasing to roughly 3.1 percent for the region as a whole as well as for both major island chains (School of Public Health n.d.) (see Table 2). Despite this overall growth, data on the populations of individual island units indicate that the number of inhabitants on each remained generally constant between 1958 and 1967, with two major exceptions: The population of Kwajalein Atoll grew by nearly 2,300 persons, and the population of Majuro Atoll grew by more than 1,800 persons (see Table 3). The population of Lib Island more than tripled over the same nine years, though adding fewer than 100 people. Local population densities increased accordingly (see Table 4). The calculation of density on Kwajalein Atoll once again accounts for a reduction of potential places of residence, with islets and the lagoon area in the central portion of the atoll being reserved for U.S. military purposes beginning in the mid-1960s (Office of Economic Adjustment 1984:48).

The trend towards an increasingly youthful population, which began between 1935 and 1958, continued into 1967 (see Figure 4), with median age decreasing to 15.2 years. Data on the age composition of individual island units once again are available for 1967 (Table 8). Substantial variability in the age structure of island units is evident. Kwajalein and Majuro, the two atolls that experienced the greatest population increases during this period, contained relatively fewer individuals in both the young and old age groups examined than did the Marshall Islands as a whole. The relatively greater representation of individuals in the central age groups, particularly those aged 20 through 39 years, probably indicates people migrating to these atolls in search of employment.

Data on fertility are available for 1967 and for the remaining census years examined (Table 9). Fertility in the Marshalls was high in 1967, offering one explanation for the continuing rapid population growth throughout the region. The crude birth rate in 1967 was roughly twice that found during the Japanese administration. Data on fertility also are available for individual island units (Table 10); these data provide a means of comparing different places, though for island units with relatively small populations fertility measures can fluctuate greatly and

TABLE 8. Population by Age and Area: 1967

Island Unit	Total Persons	Age Group (Percentage)			
		<15	15-24	25-59	60+
Marshall Islands	18,578 ^a	47.8	16.8	25.4	6.7
Ralik Chain	8,732	48.7	16.9	25.2	6.5
Ailinglapalap ^b	1,195	50.5	15.9	23.8	8.5
Bikini	-	-	-	-	-
Ebon	836	51.6	15.0	21.3	10.5
Enewetak	-	-	-	-	-
Jabat ^b	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Jaluit	1,113	45.1	19.8	23.4	11.0
Kili ^c	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Kwajalein ^d	3,540	47.6	17.1	27.8	3.7
Lae	131	51.9	12.2	26.0	9.9
Lib	142	49.3	18.3	30.3	1.4
Namorik	547	46.1	17.0	22.7	9.7
Namu	597	53.3	16.1	25.0	4.2
Rongelap	189	49.7	14.8	24.9	8.5
Rongrik	-	-	-	-	-
Ujae	191	55.0	14.1	23.6	7.3
Ujelang	251	48.6	19.1	21.1	0.4
Wotho ^c	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Ratak Chain	9,758	47.0	16.6	25.6	6.9
Ailuk	384	51.3	16.1	24.0	8.1
Arno	1,273	46.0	16.9	25.7	8.8
Aur	361	52.4	17.2	22.2	7.5
Likiep	430	48.4	15.1	26.5	6.7
Majuro	5,249	45.9	17.5	25.7	5.4
Maloelap	494	50.0	14.4	24.1	9.5
Mejit	320	49.4	10.6	24.7	10.9
Mili	582	48.1	13.6	27.3	7.9
Utrik	269	49.4	11.2	28.6	9.3
Wotje	396	46.5	19.2	24.7	8.8

Source: School of Public Health n.d.

^aTotal includes populations for Kili and Wotho (not enumerated), other islands "not specified," and 19 persons with residence "not specified." Total for each island unit includes persons whose ages were "not specified" and "foreign born" individuals (whose ages similarly were not specified).

^bPopulation of Jabat Island included in Ailinglapalap Atoll.

^cThe 1967 census included Kili Island and Wotho Atoll, but the final report does not enumerate these data.

^dIncludes only those individuals living on Ebeye Islet; other islets in the atoll were not included in the final census report.

TABLE 9. Measures of Fertility for the Marshall Islands: Select Census Years

Year	Total Persons	Total Births	Crude Birth Rate	General Fertility Rate	Total Fertility Rate
1967	18,578	774 ^a	41.7	225.8	7,888
1970	22,888	909	39.7	200.8	6,769
1973	25,045	1,028	41.1	210.0	6,433
1980	30,873	1,130 ^a	36.6	183.9	5,131
1988	43,380	2,137	49.3	244.0	7,237

Sources: School of Public Health n.d.; U.S. Bureau of the Census 1972, 1983a, 1983b; U.S. Dept. of State 1981; Office of Census Coordinator 1975; Republic of the Marshall Islands 1989, 1990.

^aMeasures for 1967 and 1980 differ from those in Table 10 due to conflicting data. The data here are reported births for each year (except 1988, which are estimated births for that year), and thus should be comparable across years. Unfortunately, these same data are not available for each island unit, forcing us to employ different data sources for Table 10.

thus provide only limited insights. Although the population of the Ratak chain was greater than that of the Ralik chain in 1967, fertility was slightly greater in the latter for the three measures calculated. Considering the general and total fertility rates, which are more sensitive measures of reproduction than the crude birth rate, fertility on Kwajalein Atoll in 1967 was greater than that of the Marshalls as a whole, while fertility on Majuro Atoll was lower.

Age-specific mortality data are also available for 1967 as well as for the remaining four census years examined. Focusing upon key age groups, data for 1967 indicate lower infant mortality (in terms of proportion of total deaths) than the average for the five census years examined (Table 11). In contrast, mortality among individuals aged 70 years and older was greater. Age-specific death rates in 1967 varied when compared to the average for the five census years. Although the Marshalls apparently experienced lower infant mortality in 1967 than the five-year average, the mortality rate for individuals aged 70 years and over also was lower in 1967 than for the five years combined (Table 12).

Demographic data for 1967 suggest that the population of the Marshall Islands grew rapidly following the 1958 census. Available evidence suggests that high fertility and low mortality caused this growth.

TABLE 10. Fertility Measures by Area: 1967 and 1980

Island Unit	1967				1980					
	Total Persons	Total Births ^a	Crude Birth Rate	General Fertility Rate	Total Fertility Rate	Total Persons	Total Births	Crude Birth Rate	General Fertility Rate	Total Fertility Rate
Marshall Islands	18,578	728	39.2	184.7	6,626	30,873	1,329	43.0	216.3	7,051
Ralik Chain	8,732	357	40.9	203.4	7,178	13,684	682	49.8	260.5	8,108
Ailinglapalap	1,195	53	44.4	261.1	8,846	1,385	78	56.3	333.3	9,102
Ebon	836	28	33.5	188.4	6,900	887	60	67.6	405.4	13,898
Enewetak	-	-	-	-	-	542	30	55.4	263.2	8,775
Jabat	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	72	1	13.9	83.3	1,667
Jaluit	1,113	29	26.1	139.2	5,219	1,450	53	36.6	208.7	6,731
Kili	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	489	28	57.3	252.3	7,962
Kwajalein ^b	3,540	157	44.4	194.3	6,790	6,624	334	50.4	248.3	7,601
Lae	131	8	61.1	347.8	12,595	237	12	50.6	333.3	7,750
Lib	142	4	28.2	142.9	4,762	98	3	30.6	150.0	7,381
Namorik	547	21	38.4	193.5	7,566	617	51	82.7	542.6	18,657
Namu	597	31	51.9	259.6	7,367	654	17	26.0	121.4	4,018
Rongelap	189	12	63.5	342.9	15,125	235	7	29.8	170.7	5,500
Ujae	191	7	36.6	185.2	6,750	309	5	16.2	89.3	3,237
Ujelang	251	7	27.9	162.8	4,000	-	-	-	-	-
Wotho	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	85	3	35.3	230.8	5,000

Ratak Chain	9,758	367	37.6	168.0	6,124	17,189	602	35.0	170.8	5,853
Ailuk	384	13	33.9	191.2	7,381	413	7	16.9	92.1	2,415
Arno	1,273	35	27.5	142.2	5,850	1,487	4	2.7	15.5	315
Aur	361	9	24.9	140.6	4,271	444	17	38.3	202.4	6,227
Likiep	430	9	20.9	106.1	3,790	481	16	33.3	188.2	5,708
Majuro	5,249	228	43.4	175.8	6,150	11,791	430	36.5	168.2	5,909
Maloelap	494	18	36.4	173.9	5,960	614	28	45.6	231.4	6,780
Mejit	320	13	40.5	220.0	10,248	325	13	40.0	224.1	7,068
Mili	582	15	25.3	126.2	4,702	763	53	69.5	392.6	11,995
Utrik	269	12	44.6	196.4	8,625	336	11	32.7	164.2	6,090
Wotje	396	15	37.9	180.6	6,747	535	23	43.0	270.6	9,845

Sources: School of Public Health n.d.; U.S. Bureau of the Census 1983b.

Note: Includes infants born to mothers aged <15, >49, and of unknown age; the "unknown" group is used for crude fertility rate but not for general or total fertility rates.

^a1967 fertility based on infants 1 year old and younger, and thus excludes those who died during the first year of life.

^bEbeye only; data for the remainder of Kwajalein Atoll unavailable.

TABLE 11. Registered Deaths in the Marshall Islands, Percentages by Age Group: 1967, 1970, 1973, 1980, and 1988

Age Group	1967	1970	1973	1980	1988	Average
Number						
Total Deaths	100	134	151	81	380	113
Percentage						
All Ages	100.0 ^a	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0 ^a
<1	16.0	16.4	33.1	25.9	27.6	25.3
1-4	5.0	3.7	9.3	8.6	16.8	11.2
5-9	2.0	2.2	1.3	—	3.7	2.5
10-14	2.0	1.5	2.6	2.5	2.4	2.2
15-19	4.0	2.2	2.0	2.5	2.6	2.6
20-24	—	1.5	2.0	3.7	3.2	2.4
25-29	1.0	—	0.7	2.5	2.9	1.8
30-34	3.0	3.0	2.0	3.7	2.6	2.7
35-39	—	0.7	3.3	1.2	2.6	2.0
40-44	2.0	3.7	3.3	1.2	2.1	2.5
45-49	3.0	5.2	2.6	7.4	1.8	3.2
50-54	4.0	5.2	5.3	4.9	2.1	3.7
55-59	4.0	10.4	6.6	7.4	2.6	5.2
60-64	7.0	4.5	3.3	12.3	3.7	5.0
65-69	4.0	9.0	4.0	3.7	5.0	5.2
70-74	9.0	9.7	5.3	2.5	5.8	6.4
75+	21.0	20.9	13.2	9.9	12.4	14.7

Sources: 1967 calculations based on data on deaths in the 11.5 months preceding the 1967 census, as presented in School of Public Health n.d.; 1970 and 1973 calculations on data on deaths for each calendar year in U.S. Dept. of State 1981; 1980 calculations based upon data on deaths in the 1980 calendar year in U.S. Dept. of State 1982; 1988 calculations based on data (estimated deaths) in Republic of the Marshall Islands 1990.

^aDoes not sum to 100.0 percent due to inclusion in total of 13 individuals whose age at death was "not specified."

both in the region as a whole and on island units that experienced the greatest increases in population. Although data on migration within the Marshalls are unavailable in the 1967 census, the relatively large proportions of individuals in central age groups on Kwajalein and Majuro suggest that relocation to these atolls in part may have been responsible for their exceptionally large populations. Mobility almost certainly played an important role elsewhere in the Marshalls as well, likely accounting for depopulation on some island units and population growth on others.

TABLE 12. Age-Specific Death Rates in the Marshall Islands: 1967, 1970, 1973, 1980, and 1988

Age Group	1967	1970	1973	1980	1988	Average
Total	5.4 ^a	5.9	6.0 ^a	2.6	8.8	6.0 ^a
<1	21.8	20.3	46.9	13.6	59.5	34.5
1-4	1.9	1.6	3.7	1.4	9.3	4.5
5-9	0.7	0.9	0.5	-	1.8	0.9
10-14	0.8	0.7	1.3	0.5	1.5	1.0
15-19	2.0	1.2	1.1	0.7	2.4	1.5
20-24	-	1.2	1.4	1.2	3.4	1.8
25-29	1.3	-	0.6	0.9	3.6	1.7
30-34	3.9	3.4	2.8	1.7	3.8	3.1
35-39	-	0.8	5.4	0.9	4.6	2.7
40-44	3.3	4.6	5.9	1.2	5.4	4.3
45-49	4.1	6.8	5.2	7.4	7.2	6.3
50-54	7.0	8.8	10.8	5.7	10.8	8.7
55-59	9.7	21.1	15.2	9.0	14.7	14.3
60-64	17.2	15.3	9.7	15.6	22.0	16.2
65-69	13.9	37.4	16.8	7.1	34.9	22.8
70-74	45.5	73.4	31.4	8.2	59.0	43.3
75+	60.2	113.8	53.5	26.9	137.8	77.2

Sources: See Table 11.

^aIncludes individuals whose age group was listed as "not stated"; 1967 total death rate also includes individuals whose age *at death* was "not stated."

Regional Demography in 1970

In 1970, the U.S. Bureau of the Census conducted the first of its two censuses of the Marshall Islands (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1972). Sources of inaccuracy have been identified in this census for certain portions of the TTPI—notably problems with persons moving from one place to another during the census, complicated by possible undercounts in some areas. Although researchers have not identified such problems in the Marshall Islands data, some of the 1970 results are highly questionable, as discussed below.

Dramatic changes in Marshall Islands population occurred in the three years between 1967 and 1970. The most obvious was population growth (see Table 2); the population of the Marshalls increased by 23.2 percent over the three years examined, at an average annual rate of 7.2 percent.⁴ The greatest increase occurred in the Ralik chain (see Table 3). Surprisingly, most island units in this chain actually lost population

between 1967 and 1970; the population of Jaluit Atoll, for instance, decreased by more than 600 persons. But demographic growth on Kwajalein Atoll countered these widespread losses, the population increasing by roughly 4,300 persons over the same period; once again, most of this increase occurred on the small islet of Ebeye. The population of the Ratak chain also grew between 1967 and 1970. As was the case in 1967, many island units in this chain lost population. The main exception was Majuro Atoll, where population increased by nearly 2,200 persons. Together, Kwajalein and Majuro atolls accounted for more than 66.4 percent of the Marshalls' total 1970 population. The population densities on these two atolls were much greater than any previously documented in the region (see Table 4).

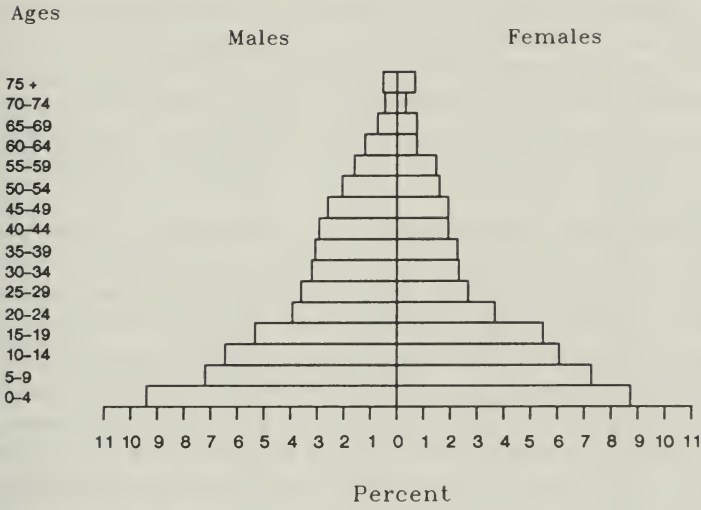
Data on the age composition of the Marshall Islands as a whole in 1970 indicate relative decreases both in individuals aged 14 years and younger and in individuals aged 60 years and older (Figure 5), with the median age increasing from that recorded in 1967 to 17.5 years (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1972:15). The decrease in the proportion of the population aged 4 years and younger suggests a likely decline in fertility—which is consistent with available vital statistics (see Table 9) but inconsistent with the rapid population growth documented during the three years preceding the 1970 census.

The crude death rate increased between 1967 and 1970, although infant mortality apparently fell slightly (see Table 12). This decrease in infant mortality in part would have countered the decrease in fertility indicated between 1967 and 1970. Because data on mobility in 1970 are unavailable, the degree to which this process contributed to population growth throughout the Marshalls, and particularly on Kwajalein and Majuro atolls, is uncertain—though most of the population growth experienced on these two atolls almost certainly would have been due to in-migration.

Regional Demography in 1973

Because of likely problems with the 1970 census data, the Trust Territory High Commissioner authorized another census in 1973 (Office of Census Coordinator 1975). The results of this census indicated that the population of the Marshall Islands continued to increase rapidly (see Table 2), though the 3.0 percent average annual growth evident in the early 1970s was considerably slower than the rate of increase suggested for the late 1960s. Available data indicate that the Ralik chain lost pop-

Age and Sex Distribution, Marshall Islands: 1970



Age and Sex Distribution, Marshall Islands: 1973

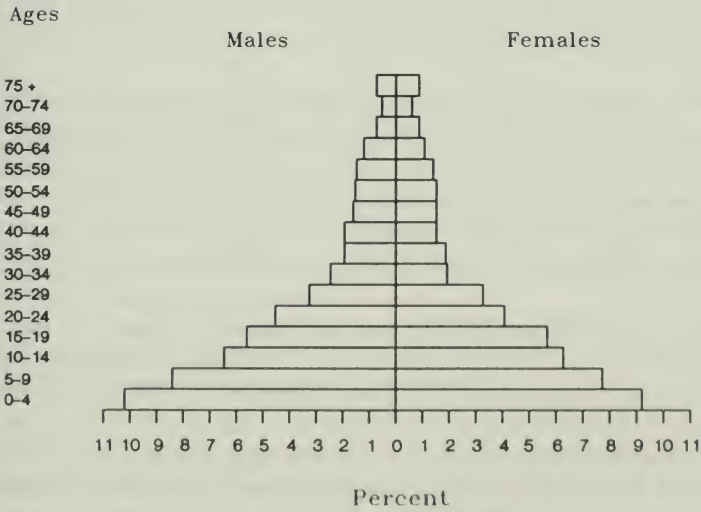


FIGURE 5. Population pyramids: 1970, 1973.

ulation between 1970 and 1973 (see Table 3). Although the population on several island units in this chain declined, the main decrease in population apparently occurred on Ebeye in Kwajalein Atoll. In contrast, the number of inhabitants on Jaluit Atoll apparently grew markedly over the same time period. The population of the Ratak chain increased substantially during the early 1970s. Of the several island units that shared in this population growth—including Arno, Likiep, and Mili atolls—Majuro Atoll grew most rapidly with the addition of nearly 2,900 persons.

Pertinent data indicate that the age composition of the Marshall Islands in 1973 was similar to that of 1967—most notably in the proportion aged 14 years or younger, the proportion aged 60 years or older (see Figure 5), and the median age of 16.0 years. In a slight shift from earlier years examined, the Ralik chain contained larger proportions of both the younger *and* older age groups than did the Marshall Islands as a whole (Table 13). The age composition of the individual island units varied greatly once again. Focusing on the atolls that experienced the greatest change since 1970, note that Kwajalein Atoll contained proportionally more younger individuals (aged 14 years and less) than the Marshalls as a whole, and fewer older ones (aged 60 years-plus), while Majuro contained proportionally fewer of both groups. Compared to data from 1967, the relative representation of the youngest and oldest age groups increased on Kwajalein Atoll and decreased on Majuro Atoll by 1973.

Data on fertility for the Marshall Islands as a whole indicate a slight increase between 1970 and 1973 in all measures but total fertility rate (see Table 9). Crude death rate also increased slightly (see Table 12). Changes in regionwide mortality during the early 1970s included in particular a substantial increase in mortality during the first year of life and a decrease in mortality among individuals aged 55 years and older.

Data on mobility of TTPI-born persons in the Marshall Islands in 1973 describe a population that was quite mobile within the Marshalls. Slightly more than half the TTPI-born persons living in the Marshalls in 1973 were Marshall Islanders residing in an island unit other than their home area (Table 14). Mobility was less pronounced in the Ralik than in the Ratak chain. Most island units contained a majority of individuals who considered that unit their home. Major exceptions to this tendency were Kwajalein and Majuro atolls, suggesting that in-migration had been extremely important to population growth there (until 1973 for Majuro Atoll and previously for Kwajalein Atoll). Two other exceptions

TABLE 13. Population by Age and Area: 1973

Island Unit	Total Persons	Age Group (Percentage) ^a			
		<15	15-24	25-59	60+
Marshall Islands	25,045 ^b	47.7	19.8	26.4	6.0
Ralik Chain	10,692	50.7	15.3	27.5	6.5
Ailinglapalap	1,100	50.1	17.5	24.9	7.5
Bikini	75	26.7	24.0	45.3	4.0
Ebon	740	49.7	15.0	22.4	12.4
Jabat	70	51.4	18.6	20.0	10.0
Jaluit	925	50.8	13.1	24.1	12.0
Kili	360	46.9	18.1	29.2	5.8
Kwajalein	5,469	49.4	15.7	30.6	4.2
Lae	154	57.8	11.0	20.8	9.7
Lib	98	62.2	13.3	20.4	4.1
Namorik	431	54.1	12.1	21.3	11.8
Namu	493	57.6	13.0	24.7	4.7
Rongelap	165	58.2	9.1	23.6	9.1
Ujae	209	56.5	13.9	22.0	7.7
Ujelang	342	53.5	16.7	25.4	4.4
Wotho	61	62.3	11.5	21.3	4.9
Ratak Chain	14,334	45.4	23.1	25.5	5.7
Ailuk	335	59.1	10.1	23.3	7.5
Arno	1,120	50.6	16.2	25.0	8.2
Aur	300	55.0	14.7	23.7	6.3
Likiep	406	53.9	14.5	24.4	7.1
Majuro	10,290	42.4	26.4	26.1	4.9
Maloelap	432	49.1	19.0	24.5	6.7
Mejit	271	55.4	11.1	22.5	11.1
Mili	538	54.3	15.6	23.2	6.7
Utrik	217	55.8	12.9	23.5	7.4
Wotje	425	53.6	13.9	23.8	8.7

Source: Office of Census Coordinator 1975.

^aPercentages may not sum to precisely 100.0 due to the exclusion of 47 individuals whose ages were "not specified."

^bIncludes 19 individuals whose residence was "not specified."

are Bikini and Ujelang atolls. On the former, people evacuated in the late 1940s to permit nuclear testing had begun to move back (in 1972). On Ujelang Atoll, the large percentage of residents claiming a home district elsewhere in the Marshalls probably consists largely of people evacuated from Enewetak Atoll in the late 1940s (again to permit nuclear testing), though this figure seems excessively high.

TABLE 14. **TTPI-born Population by Area of Usual Residence, According to Home District: 1973**

Usual Residence	Total Persons	Home District (Percentage)			
		Same Island Unit	Elsewhere in Marshalls	Elsewhere in TTPI	Outside of TTPI
Marshall Islands	24,258	41.2	55.9	2.2	0.6
Ralik Chain	10,522	52.4	44.4	2.5	0.8
Ailinglapalap	1,098	85.2	14.6	0.3	—
Bikini	66	16.7	71.2	12.1	—
Ebon	736	79.3	20.2	0.4	—
Jabat	70	64.3	35.7	—	—
Jaluit	906	79.8	19.5	0.7	—
Kili	360	56.1	43.9	—	—
Kwajalein	5,342	29.5	64.6	4.3	1.6
Lae	154	89.6	10.4	—	—
Lib	98	83.7	16.3	—	—
Namorik	425	87.0	12.0	0.9	—
Namu	493	95.5	4.5	—	—
Rongelap	163	81.6	17.8	0.6	—
Ujae	208	91.3	8.7	—	—
Ujelang	342	0.3	98.5	1.2	—
Wotho	61	80.3	19.7	—	—
Ratak Chain	13,736	32.7	64.8	2.0	0.5
Ailuk	335	94.6	5.4	—	—
Arno	1,112	67.7	32.2	0.1	—
Aur	300	79.0	21.0	—	—
Likiep	406	73.9	26.1	—	—
Majuro	9,735	15.7	80.8	2.7	0.7
Maloelap	428	83.6	16.1	0.2	—
Mejit	270	89.6	10.4	—	—
Mili	514	72.0	28.0	—	—
Utrik	217	70.0	30.0	—	—
Wotje	419	57.8	41.8	0.5	—

Source: Office of Census Coordinator 1975.

Note: Calculations do not include one individual whose home district was "not stated."

Regional Demography in 1980

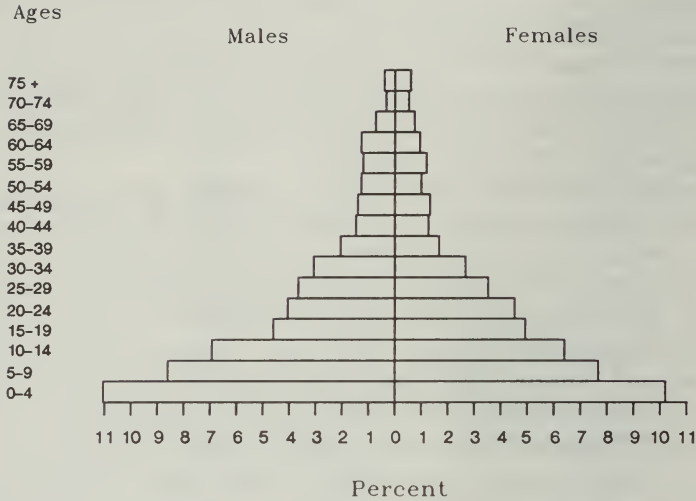
Data from the 1980 census suggest that 3.0 percent annual population growth in the Marshall Islands continued from 1973 until the end of the decade (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1983a) (see Table 2). Some concern exists that the 1980 census was an undercount; if so, population growth would have been greater during the mid- and late 1970s than the

recorded data suggest. The data available indicate that both the Ralik and Ratak chains grew similarly, with increases tending to be more dispersed among island units than previously seen (see Table 3). Kwajalein and Majuro atolls once again experienced the greatest absolute growth between 1973 and 1980. But changes deserving mention as well include substantial increases in population on Arno and Jaluit atolls and the resettlement of Enewetak Atoll for the first time since its evacuation during the late 1940s (Mason 1989:36).

Previously identified trends in the changing age composition of Marshall Islands population continued through the last part of the 1970s: an increase in the relative number of young persons and a decrease in the relative number of old persons (Figure 6). As one would expect, the median age decreased accordingly, to 14.8 years (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1983a:8). Once again, proportionally more individuals aged 14 years and younger, and proportionally fewer aged 60 years and older, lived in the Ralik chain than in the Marshalls as a whole (Table 15). Compared to the entire region in 1980, Kwajalein Atoll contained a slightly greater proportion of individuals belonging to the younger age group and a lesser proportion of individuals belonging to the older age group—the former increasing and the latter decreasing since 1973. Majuro Atoll, in turn, contained proportionally fewer young and old persons than the region as a whole in 1980, though the magnitude of change from 1973 once again was slight. The age profiles for Arno and Jaluit atolls both indicate greater relative representation of young and old than in the Marshalls as a whole.

Compared to similar data from the preceding three census years, fertility decreased in 1980 (see Table 9), though different data sources present conflicting results (see also Table 10, and notes on each table) and persisting high fertility is likely given the demographic structure of the republic. A comparison of fertility for individual island units in 1967 and 1980 indicates an increase for most places in the Marshalls, more so for the Ralik than Ratak chain. Fertility on Majuro Atoll in 1980 was comparable to that documented for the atoll in 1967; however, Kwajalein Atoll apparently experienced a marked increase in fertility. Mortality in the Marshall Islands as a whole was much lower in 1980 than in any of the other census years considered in this study (see Table 12). Unfortunately, the 1980 mortality measures are excessively low in comparison to the values one might expect in Micronesia during the latter half of the twentieth century, causing one to question their accuracy (see, for instance, the graph of *estimated* crude death rates in the republic [Republic of the Marshall Islands 1990:76]).

Age and Sex Distribution, Marshall Islands: 1980



Age and Sex Distribution, Marshall Islands: 1988

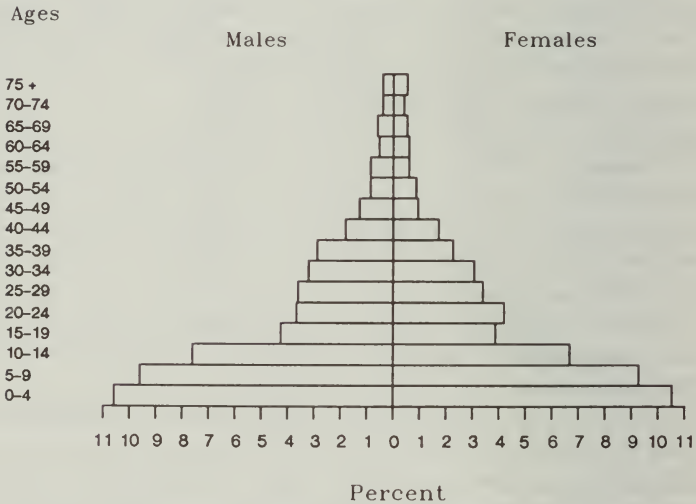


FIGURE 6. Population pyramids: 1980, 1988.

TABLE 15. Population by Age and Area: 1980

Island Unit	Total Persons	Age Group (Percentage)			
		<15	15-24	25-59	60+
Marshall Islands	30,873	50.5	18.0	26.3	5.2
Ralik Chain	13,684	52.3	16.7	26.0	5.0
Ailinglapalap	1,385	55.4	15.5	22.4	6.7
Ebon	887	52.2	15.6	24.0	8.2
Enewetak	542	50.7	18.8	27.5	3.0
Jabat	72	58.3	11.1	22.2	8.3
Jaluit	1,450	52.8	16.1	23.4	7.6
Kili	489	46.6	17.2	32.1	4.1
Kwajalein	6,624	50.8	17.0	28.4	3.8
Lae	237	55.7	17.7	20.3	6.3
Lib	98	55.1	20.4	23.5	1.0
Namorik	617	61.1	10.7	22.0	6.2
Namu	654	50.2	21.4	23.5	4.9
Rongelap	235	57.4	14.9	22.6	5.1
Ujae	309	55.3	20.7	18.1	5.8
Wotho	85	62.4	12.9	23.5	1.2
Ratak Chain	17,189	49.0	19.1	26.6	5.3
Ailuk	413	52.3	15.0	26.6	6.1
Arno	1,487	54.8	13.8	25.2	6.2
Aur	444	53.6	19.4	23.0	4.1
Likiep	481	51.4	17.9	23.5	7.3
Majuro	11,791	47.1	20.1	27.8	5.0
Maloelap	614	53.9	17.1	25.2	3.7
Mejit	325	54.2	15.1	23.7	7.1
Mili	763	51.9	20.3	22.0	5.8
Utrik	336	47.9	21.1	22.9	8.0
Wotje	535	53.3	16.4	23.4	6.9

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 1983a.

Data on mobility in 1980, although not strictly comparable to those from 1973 (short-term versus lifetime mobility, respectively), indicate that a major change in the movement of people occurred sometime during the mid- and late 1970s—describing a population that had become less mobile than before. For the Marshalls as a whole, as well as for both major island chains, roughly 90 percent of the population aged 5 years and over resided on the same island unit in 1980 as in 1975 (Table 16). With a few minor exceptions, this evidence of a less mobile population holds for major island units throughout the Marshalls. Thus the wide-

TABLE 16. Population by Area, According to Place of Residence in 1975: 1980

Island Unit	Total Persons ^a	Place of Residence in 1975 (Percentage)			
		Same Island Unit	Elsewhere in Marshalls	Elsewhere in TTPI	Outside of TTPI
Marshall Islands	22,963	89.4	9.2	0.3	1.0
Ralik Chain	9,947	91.3	8.1	0.2	0.4
Ailinglapalap	962	90.4	9.3	0.2	0.1
Ebon	632	99.7	—	0.3	—
Enewetak	306	0.7	99.0	—	0.3
Jabat	56	58.9	41.1	—	—
Jaluit	1,105	94.7	4.8	—	0.5
Kili	384	99.7	0.3	—	—
Kwajalein	4,848	95.0	4.1	0.3	0.6
Lae	182	97.8	2.2	—	—
Lib	74	89.2	10.8	—	—
Namorik	443	90.7	9.3	—	—
Namu	493	91.7	8.1	—	0.2
Rongelap	177	93.8	5.1	0.6	0.6
Ujae	222	92.8	7.2	—	—
Wotho	63	68.3	30.2	—	1.6
Ratak Chain	13,016	88.0	10.1	0.4	1.5
Ailuk	289	95.5	4.5	—	—
Arno	1,053	92.8	7.0	0.1	0.1
Aur	339	92.3	7.7	—	—
Likiep	322	88.5	10.9	0.3	0.3
Majuro	9,120	87.1	10.4	0.5	2.0
Maloelap	433	89.8	9.7	—	0.5
Mejit	249	83.9	15.3	0.8	—
Mili	536	83.0	15.5	0.2	1.3
Utrik	256	98.8	1.2	—	—
Wotje	419	86.2	13.6	—	0.2

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 1983b.

^aIncludes only those individuals more than 5 years old; excludes 39 individuals whose place of residence in 1975 was not given.

spread population increases for various island units throughout the Marshall Islands between 1973 and 1980 apparently were due to natural increase as opposed to movement of people between places. Although migration to Kwajalein Atoll was relatively low between 1975 and 1980, relocation to Majuro Atoll in 1975 or later accounted for nearly 13 percent of its 1980 population aged over five years.

Regional Demography in 1988

The most recent census of the Marshall Islands, conducted in November 1988 (Republic of the Marshall Islands 1989), indicates that total population increased by more than 40.5 percent from 1980—the result of average annual growth approaching 4.3 percent (see Table 2). Such a rate of increase is quite rapid, and it bears noting once again that in part this high value may be a product of an undercount in the 1980 census. Much of this apparent increase occurred in the Ratak chain, though the population of virtually every island unit in the region grew by some amount (see Table 3). Majuro and Kwajalein atolls once again experienced the greatest absolute growth between 1980 and 1988. The population of Majuro Atoll increased by nearly 7,900 persons between 1980 and 1988, and together with Kwajalein Atoll accounted for more than 84.4 percent of regional demographic growth over these eight years; by 1988, slightly more than two-thirds of the republic's total population resided on these two atolls. The number of inhabitants on Ailinglapalap, Arno, and Jaluit atolls each grew to roughly 1,700 persons by 1988, while the populations of Namorik and Namu atolls grew by large relative amounts. The Greenpeace ship *Rainbow Warrior* relocated the population of Rongelap Atoll to Kwajalein Atoll in 1985 (Mason 1989: 36) because of persisting radioactive pollution initially blown in from a nearby nuclear test during the 1950s (Hines 1962:165–180; Alcalay 1984: 30–31)—accounting for part of the population increase on Kwajalein.

The relative increase in young persons, coupled with a relative decrease in older persons, continued in the Marshall Islands throughout the 1980s (Figure 6). As a result, the median age for the region decreased to 14.0 years (Republic of the Marshall Islands 1990:64). Similarly, the tendency for the Ralik chain to contain a greater proportion of individuals aged 14 years and younger, and a lesser proportion of individuals aged 60 years and older, persisted through 1988 (Table 17). Compared to the region, Kwajalein Atoll contained proportionally more individuals younger than 60 years; Majuro Atoll contained proportionally fewer inhabitants aged 60 years or less, though it contained relatively more individuals aged 15–59 years (in general, working ages) than did the region as a whole. By 1988, Ailinglapalap, Arno, Namorik, and Ujae atolls contained relatively large numbers of individuals aged 14 years and younger, suggesting the important role played by fertility in the recent growth of these four island units.

Fertility increased at a regional level between 1980 and 1988, as indi-

TABLE 17. Population by Age and Area: 1988

Island Unit	Total Persons	Age Group (Percentage)			
		<15	15-24	25-59	60+
Marshall Islands	43,380	51.0	17.5	27.1	4.4
Ralik Chain	17,502	53.9	16.0	26.4	3.6
Ailinglapalap	1,715	60.9	12.1	22.9	4.1
Bikini	10	—	20.0	80.0	—
Ebon	741	59.8	11.3	24.2	4.7
Enewetak	715	52.4	17.5	26.9	3.2
Jabat	112	55.4	14.3	23.2	7.1
Jaluit	1,709	53.9	18.7	22.4	5.0
Kili	602	51.2	13.3	30.6	5.0
Kwajalein	9,311	51.4	17.0	28.6	3.1
Lae	319	58.0	17.2	22.3	2.5
Lib	115	53.9	9.6	33.0	3.5
Namorik	814	60.8	12.7	21.0	5.5
Namu	801	54.9	18.4	23.3	3.4
Ujae	448	61.4	12.7	24.1	1.8
Wotho	90	53.3	13.3	25.6	7.8
Ratak Chain	25,878	49.1	18.5	27.5	4.9
Ailuk	488	57.6	13.7	23.4	5.3
Arno	1,656	58.7	14.9	21.6	4.9
Aur	438	55.3	16.9	24.2	3.7
Likiep	482	54.6	13.1	24.5	7.9
Majuro	19,664	46.7	19.6	28.9	4.8
Maloelap	796	54.6	16.2	24.9	4.3
Mejit	445	54.2	12.6	28.3	4.9
Mili	854	56.8	15.1	23.3	4.8
Utrik	409	54.3	16.4	23.0	6.4
Wotje	646	56.7	17.5	22.0	3.9

Source: Republic of the Marshall Islands 1989.

cated by substantial growth in all three measures considered in this study (see Table 9). Mortality also increased markedly between 1980 and 1988, with the crude death rate as well as infant mortality exceeding the measures for any year after the mid-1960s (see Table 12). Note that this indication of increased mortality contrasts with estimates prepared by the republic's Office of Planning and Statistics, which suggest a steady *decrease* in mortality since 1974 (Republic of the Marshall Islands 1990:76). Increasing mortality also is inconsistent with the substantial population growth experienced in the Marshalls over the first eight years of the 1980s.

Data on population mobility are available for 1988, though once again they are not strictly comparable to the information presented above for earlier years. Information on population by place of birth indicates that the inhabitants living in the Marshall Islands in 1988 were very mobile throughout their lifetimes within the region itself: Though nearly 60.0 percent of the total inhabitants were born in the island unit in which they resided in 1988, 36.6 percent were born elsewhere in the Marshalls; conversely, only about 3.6 percent moved to the Marshall Islands from outside the region (Table 18). Majuro Atoll had the largest proportion of in-migrants for a highly populated place; Bikini and Enewetak both show signs of high in-migration, the result of resettlement by people born elsewhere during three decades of nuclear exile. In terms of migration within the Marshalls between 1980 and 1988, available data indicate that despite general growth throughout the region most island units experienced negative net migration during this time period (Table 18). Major exceptions to this trend once again were Majuro and Kwajalein atolls, the former gaining more than 1,400 persons through migration.

Regional Demographic Change in the Marshall Islands

In the preceding section, we presented data on the demography of the Marshall Islands throughout the twentieth century. Two types of demographic change characterized this republic over the past fifty years: population growth in the Marshalls as a whole, and changing geographical arrangement of population. The regional demographic evolution has been a complex process, with a number of possible causes yielding different configurations of population over time. Changing numbers and distributions of people in an area are important, on the one hand often signaling fundamental cultural and economic changes while at the same time representing basic adaptive challenges. With this latter thought in mind, we examine both the causes and the repercussions of regional demographic change in the Marshall Islands in greater detail.

Demographic Processes Underlying Population Change in the Marshall Islands

Although the precontact population of the Marshall Islands is completely open to speculation owing to lack of reliable data, the possible total of 15,000 to 16,000 persons (Krämer and Nevermann 1938:172) lies within the realm of possibility (see also Hermann 1909:559). By

TABLE 18. Population by Area, According to Place of Birth and Internal (within Republic of the Marshall Islands) Net Migration: 1988

Island Unit	Total Persons	Place of Birth (Percentage)			Net Migration	
		Same Island Unit	Elsewhere in Marshalls	Elsewhere in Micronesia	Outside of Micronesia	Within Marshalls 1980-1988
Marshall Islands	43,380	59.8	36.6	1.7	1.9	...
Ralik Chain	17,502	62.2	35.4	1.2	1.1	...
Ailinglapalap	1,715	74.9	24.1	0.7	0.3	-73
Bikini	10	-	80.0	-	20.0	-4
Ebon	741	80.0	19.6	0.1	0.3	-294
Enewetak	715	26.3	71.3	1.8	0.6	85
Jabat	112	36.6	63.4	-	-	28
Jaluit	1,709	42.3	55.9	1.1	0.8	-236
Kili	602	65.4	33.2	0.3	1.0	-26
Kwajalein	9,311	63.2	33.5	1.6	1.7	187
Lae	319	70.2	29.8	-	-	-6
Lib	115	46.1	53.9	-	-	-41
Namorik	814	73.5	24.6	1.6	0.4	-147
Namu	801	79.4	20.1	-	0.5	-77
Rongelap	-	-	-	-	-	-269
Ujae	448	54.0	45.8	-	0.2	62
Ujelang	-	-	-	-	-	-41
Wotho	90	37.8	61.1	-	1.1	-15

Ratak Chain	25,878	58.2	37.4	2.0	2.3	...
Ailuk	488	76.2	23.6	-	0.2	-81
Arno	1,656	69.9	29.2	0.4	0.5	-266
Aur	438	73.7	26.0	-	0.2	-90
Likiep	482	65.4	33.8	-	0.8	-83
Majuro	19,664	54.9	39.6	2.5	2.9	1,429
Maloelap	796	69.6	29.9	0.3	0.3	-50
Mejit	445	70.1	29.4	0.2	0.2	-58
Mili	854	62.3	35.4	1.9	0.5	166
Utrik	409	67.5	32.5	-	-	-53
Wotje	646	65.2	33.7	0.2	0.9	-47

Source: Republic of the Marshall Islands 1989.

1883 the population of the Marshalls had declined to about 11,000 (Jung 1893, 4:260), probably attributable to a combination of increased mortality (from the large number of introduced diseases and natural disasters, noted above) and decreased fertility (probably due primarily to gonorrhea, coupled with a possible decrease in persons of reproductive age; see Spennemann 1992:10). Although Finsch estimated 7,000–8,000 inhabitants in the Marshall Islands in the 1880s (roughly 4,000 in the Ratak chain and 3,600 in the Ralik chain) (Finsch 1893:123), his estimate appears excessively low and indicates more rapid depopulation than likely occurred (see Yanaihara 1940:44). Gradual population decline apparently continued throughout the nineteenth century, at some point (possibly early in the twentieth century) ceasing and beginning a slow recovery (Krämer and Nevermann 1938:172). Although the lowest point of Marshall Islands population is unknown, after possibly a decade of demographic recovery total inhabitants numbered fewer than 9,300 in 1909 (Wiens 1962:465).

Slow population growth continued into the Japanese administration, probably interrupted by World War II and the increased mortality (as well as interruption to normal cultural activities, such as reproductive behavior) that accompanied it. Over the past fifty years, the Marshall Islands have experienced rapid demographic growth; the approximately 3.0 percent average annual rate of increase since World War II is similar to the growth that developing countries throughout the world continue to experience (Population Reference Bureau 1990). Typically, such dramatic growth may be explained in terms of a changing balance between fertility and mortality. Measures for both of these mechanisms tend to remain high in more traditional sociocultural systems, serving to counteract one another and produce a population whose size remains constant over time. Although the process of acculturation can have differing effects on the fertility and mortality of traditional sociocultural systems, conventional wisdom argues that its most dramatic direct impacts are on the latter—with improved health care and education on health-related matters decreasing mortality across all age groups. This situation was proposed for the Trust Territory as a whole from the Japanese period until the first postwar census in 1958, indicated by a slight rise in births and a major decrease in deaths (Taeuber 1963:231). Similar processes apparently were under way in the Marshall Islands shortly after World War II (Spoehr 1949:25; Tobin 1967:61).

For the various census years examined, reliable vital statistics for the Marshall Islands often are unavailable. Nevertheless, the data collected suggest that certain changes in fertility and survivability (including lon-

geivity) may indeed account for the growth of Marshall Islands population. Crude birth rate figures, available beginning in the Japanese period, roughly doubled between 1935 and 1967, indicating about twice as many live births per thousand inhabitants in the latter year than in the former. The general fertility rate experienced a similar relative increase between the Japanese period (1930) and 1967. Comparable fertility data between 1967 and 1988 suggest that birth rates remained high through the latter year, though fluctuations in all measures considered are evident (see Table 9). Fertility varied between island units for the years when data are available. Of the places that experienced substantial population growth between 1967 and 1980, fertility was particularly high on Kwajalein Atoll—with other processes playing relatively greater roles in the population increase on Majuro Atoll (see Tables 10, 14, and 18).

To complement the overall increase in fertility, mortality in general declined at the regional level. Much of this probably was due to improved health care, coupled with the eradication of certain diseases and the development of natural immunity to others. Although natural disasters such as typhoons continued to claim some lives, major tropical storms are infrequent in the Marshalls (Fosberg 1990:9–10). Measured by crude death rate, mortality during census years 1967 through 1973 was roughly one-fourth that recorded during the period of Japanese administration, decreasing even further in 1980 (see Table 12) before resurging in 1988 (Republic of the Marshall Islands 1990:76). Comparing crude birth and death rates over time, we see a shift in the crude rate of natural increase from zero or slightly negative values during the Japanese administration to an annual gain of 33.8 to 40.5 persons per thousand between 1967 and 1988 (Figure 7). Although this *general* trend probably is accurate, once again one should avoid placing too much credence in the specific values of the measures, owing to questionable accuracy of certain vital statistics.

It is likely that declining infant mortality accounted for a large share of the overall decrease in mortality across the nearly seven decades examined. Unfortunately, information on infant mortality during the Japanese period is extremely limited. Results of a recently published study of infant mortality in the Marshall Islands indicate disagreement between direct and indirect methods of calculating this measure, though the authors make a compelling argument that infant mortality probably has decreased at least since 1973 (Levy and Booth 1988). Coupled with the relatively high crude rate of natural increase discussed immediately above, such shifts in infant mortality provide addi-

MARSHALL ISLANDS VITAL STATISTICS:

Change Over Time

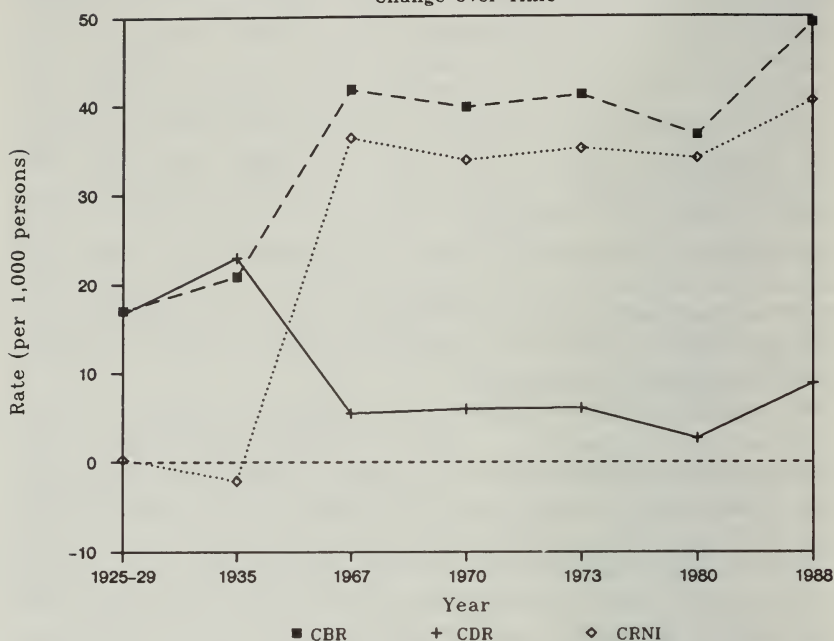


FIGURE 7. Change in crude birth rate (CBR), crude death rate (CDR), and crude rate of natural increase (CRNI) over time.

tional evidence that natural increase played a key role in Marshall Islands demographic growth.

The final cause of population change considered is migration. For the years examined in this article, migration into the Marshalls from other regions was minimal—excluding Japanese in-migrants during the late 1930s and early 1940s, whom we did not consider in our study. Migration within the region, however, often was responsible for major population changes on various island units. We can propose four phases of intraregional migration similar to those found elsewhere in Micronesia (Gorenflo and Levin 1993). Phase 1 consists of the precontact period of Marshall Islands history, when frequent, short-term mobility characterized most if not all of the region. Phase 2, occurring during the period of Japanese occupation, featured moderate movement between island units through the late 1930s (see Table 7) and much greater mobility during the war years—with virtually all interisland movement con-

trolled by the Japanese administrators. Phase 3 was marked by heavy movement between island units, as individuals relocated frequently for long periods of time; data from 1973 suggest such a trend (see Table 14), although given the nature of population change throughout the region it probably began shortly after World War II and continued until the mid-1970s. Phase 3 mobility in particular affected places with rapidly increasing populations—namely Kwajalein and Majuro atolls—where in-migration was responsible for much of the population growth experienced after the war (Connell 1983:14; Hezel 1991:279–280). Apart from the obvious tendency for relocation from rural island units to the two population centers, few specifics of this mobility surge are known; there may have been a tendency for migrants to select the closest of the two destinations, though the trend to relocate to the place where relatives live eventually took precedence (Connell 1983:20). Substantial migration to Ebeye Islet in Kwajalein Atoll became such a concern that the postwar administrators of the Marshalls made several attempts during the past three decades to limit relocation there—their “Operation Exodus” in one form or another generally meeting with only minimal success (see Alexander 1978:61–64; Connell 1983:25–26). Finally, Phase 4 of intraregional migration appears first in the 1980 census data and continues until the present throughout most of the Marshalls (see Tables 16 and 18). This last phase features reduced mobility, indicating that the major population movement characterizing Phase 3 had slowed considerably—though a slight resurgence between 1980 and 1988 is suggested for certain places (particularly Majuro Atoll). The limited mobility characteristic of Phase 4 apparently includes emigration from the Marshall Islands to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) and Guam, places that recently have received large numbers of migrants from the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) (Rubinstein and Levin 1992; Gorenflo and Levin 1993). As of 1990, only 103 individuals born in the Marshall Islands resided in the CNMI (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1992a:16), with 88 persons born in the Marshalls living in Guam (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1992b:15).

Repercussions of Population Change in the Marshall Islands

In areas where acculturation likely caused substantial change in a traditional sociocultural system, the study of demographic evolution ideally is rooted in population data that predate the influence of other societies—in essence providing a basis against which to compare subsequent changes in demographic structure. In the present study this is not possi-

ble. The Marshall Islands had virtually no contact with sociocultural systems outside of Micronesia when first visited by Kotzebue in 1817 (Hezel 1983:92). Unfortunately, Marshall Islands demography is poorly documented before the period of German colonization some six decades later and not really well documented until the initial Japanese census of the region in 1920. Available information indicates that by 1900 much of the Marshalls was heavily acculturated—a process that increased during the period of Japanese occupation (Mason 1946:62; Spoehr 1949: 68; Murai 1953:9, 86–90). In lieu of adequate precontact data, we examine the repercussions of regional demographic change in the Marshalls through applying certain basic principles of regional organization and simple statistics to the data available.

Before the arrival of Europeans, the Marshall Islands comprised a series of small chiefdoms (Kotzebue 1967, 3:169–171), the most common level of sociocultural integration found in the Pacific during precontact times (Sahlins 1958:249; see Service 1971:133–169). The regional composition of these polities apparently varied, with different Marshallese chiefdoms encompassing in some instances several island units, in other instances a single island unit, and in still other instances portions of a single island unit (Mason 1946:36–37; Hezel 1983:94, 202). The foundation of traditional territorial organization of the region was the individual community or settlement, where each settlement consisted of a collection of homesteads on an islet or island unit (Mason 1946:27–29). Each island unit usually contained one or more settlements, with those in multisettlement atolls organized into districts. One or more lesser chiefs usually administered a district, reporting in turn to paramount chiefs located at central districts (*centers*, in human geography terms [Haggett, Cliff, and Frey 1977:97–110]).

Two aspects of traditional Marshallese regional organization are important for present purposes: the geographic breadth of control of chiefdoms usually consisted of relatively small areas; and, despite the presence of social and regional hierarchies, the movement of goods (including subsistence goods) between settlements was limited at best. A number of reasons could explain these characteristics, including basic logistical problems encountered in frequent travel over open seas by traditional means of transportation, further complicated by seasonally rough weather (see Spoehr 1949:64); and the inherent instability of Marshallese chiefdoms, whose size and areas of control frequently fluctuated with the fortunes of war (Kotzebue 1967, 3:166–167). However, in all likelihood one important factor limiting the size and breadth of these chiefdoms was the inability to generate amounts of surplus subsis-

tence sufficient to support the large numbers of nonfood producers that tend to be found in highly centralized regional hierarchies (see Sahlins 1958:114).

The basis of these subsistence limitations lies largely in the environment of the Marshall Islands. In traditional times, subsistence consisted of food collected from the sea and food grown on land (Kotzebue 1967, 3:150-158; see Tobin 1967:98; Mason 1968:280; Bryan 1972:82-111, 126-134). Although marine resources were much more abundant, both played key roles in Marshallese survival, with competition for land fueling much of the warfare among islanders during traditional times (Kiste 1974:5; Hezel 1983:94). Moreover, research in a similar setting has shown that nutrients provided by food grown on land were extremely important to precontact atolls—in effect representing a limit to the population that could be supported (Bayliss-Smith 1974). Agricultural productivity on coralline atolls tends to be low, constrained by small amounts of land covered by poor soil, and climatic and microenvironmental conditions often not conducive to growing food (see Fosberg 1949, 1953; Fosberg 1960:13-21, 169-184; Fosberg 1990:8-19; Wiens 1959, 1962:363-381; Knudson 1970:56-57). Most atolls in the Marshalls probably produced only enough food to support their resident populations (Mason 1946:4-5), with Marshallese during Kotzebue's first visit citing food shortages as a major reason both for periodic warfare (to acquire additional subsistence) and for implementing population control through infanticide (Kotzebue 1967, 3:128-129, 173). Within traditional Marshallese chiefdoms, the most common tribute was not surplus energy (food) but rather services (e.g., see Kotzebue 1967, 3:170-171), as documented for other portions of Micronesia (see Burrows and Spiro 1957:170-171). Chiefs received food when visiting areas under their authority, often in the company of subjects from the central district as a means of asserting chiefly power (see Hezel 1983:202-203), but these occasions apparently were infrequent and usually occurred in ceremonial contexts such as the time of first harvest.

The picture of traditional Marshallese regional organization thus is one where large centers supported by surrounding hinterlands were absent, lacking adequate mechanisms for surplus production as well as the broad redistribution network necessary to maintain such a system. In stark contrast to traditional regional organization, the entire area currently contains two major centers of population and economic activity. Inhabitants of these centers include thousands of people who have no traditional rights to reside there (Alexander 1978:103-104), as prescribed by the Marshallese land-tenure system (see Tobin 1958; Pollock

1974; Mason 1987). The centers require substantial economic support beyond that available locally in order to survive. As discussed immediately above, the sociocultural foundation for such large-scale regional organization was absent in the traditional Marshall Islands. Even if the basis for a broad redistribution system did exist, the populations concentrated in modern centers have reached levels well in excess of regional support capabilities—for any hinterland one cares to define within the Marshall Islands. Obviously, such a regional setting could not evolve within a closed system; the basis for this development was provided by other nations, predominantly the United States.

One can begin to appreciate the degree of change in the regional demographic organization of the Marshall Islands through the use of some simple statistics. Hainline (1964, 1965) explored the formal relationship between the population of island units in Micronesia and certain environmental variables (representing aspects of geological composition, meteorological conditions, and biotic characteristics) via linear regression, where population on a particular island unit was modeled as a linear function of the variables of interest. Here we employ a similar method in modeling population as a function of two key variables: land area and annual precipitation. In considering the former we attempt to account for differing amounts of productive area available throughout the Marshall Islands, with subsistence grown on land assumed to be an important constraint on population size. In considering rainfall, in turn, we acknowledge the substantial regional variation—becoming increasingly scanty, seasonal, and unpredictable towards the northern part of the region (see Fosberg 1960:65–67, 133–147; Fosberg 1990:9; Environmental Sciences Services Administration 1968:385–388; National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration 1981:348–350; National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration n.d.)—and greatly influencing the types and amount of crops that can be grown (Kiste 1974:12). We model population with a multiple regression on both land area and precipitation for each of the ten census years examined. One would expect a stronger statistical relationship between population and these two variables for the earlier years examined, with natural factors becoming less important in determining population distribution as the influence of outside cultures increased. This expectation is borne out in the changing values of R^2 —the percentage of variance in population size explained by the two variables considered—decreasing from more than 55 percent in 1920 to roughly 9 percent in 1988 (Table 19).

Thus, even when compared to the acculturated regional organization

TABLE 19. Results of Regressing Population of Major Island Units in the Marshall Islands on Land Area and Average Annual Rainfall: Census Years

Year	R^2	Statistical Significance
1920	.55	$p < .01$
1925	.56	$p < .01$
1930	.52	$p < .01$
1935	.55	$p < .01$
1958	.39	$p < .01$
1967	.19	$.05 < p < .10$
1970	.06	$p > .10$
1973	.10	$p > .10$
1980	.11	$p > .10$
1988	.09	$p > .10$

found during Japanese times—after the Marshall Islands already had witnessed more than forty years of focused interaction with Germany—the current setting shows evidence of considerable decline in the relationship between population and two variables that generally indicate differing traditional productivity. That most Marshallese, particularly those residing in population centers, no longer rely upon traditional subsistence and economy is certain; forgoing traditional ways is the only means by which such a regional system could merge and survive. The point to be made here is the degree of change in regional demography and organization experienced in the Marshall Islands in comparison to traditional times—in an area whose capability for economic production and self-support still rests very much at traditional levels.

Further support for the magnitude of changes in regional organization, as well as insights on the nature of these changes, comes from a separate study through the application of selected spatial statistics (Gorenflo 1990). These analytical tools indicated two periods of similarity in the geographic arrangement of population, separated by the twenty-three-year period spanning 1935 and 1958. Measures of local demographic change indicated strong correspondence between consecutive pairs of census years both before 1935 and after 1958. Measures of regional demographic change, in contrast, indicated a significant tendency for places with like populations to be proximal prior to World War II, a tendency that disappeared after the war. A comparison of both local and regional demographic patterns between 1920 and 1988

points up the lack of similarity between the first and most recent census of the Marshall Islands—with considerable change in the geographic arrangement of population having resulted from nearly seven decades of incremental shifts.

Conclusion

The Marshall Islands have witnessed major demographic changes, both in total population and in the regional distribution of population, throughout their history. Some of the most dramatic changes occurred during the present century, the population more than quadrupling between 1935 and 1988. Much of this recent growth occurred in two major regional centers of population that emerged shortly after World War II, which together in 1988 contained nearly 67 percent of the republic's residents. There appear to be two causes of these demographic changes. Relevant data indicate that growth in the overall population resulted from increased survivability and longevity (probably due to improved medical treatment), coupled with increased fertility. The changing geographic distribution of population, in turn, resulted largely from migration—particularly to Majuro Atoll and Ebeye Islet from elsewhere in the Marshalls in search of wage labor, education, improved health care, and the numerous modern amenities provided at these centers (Alexander 1978; Connell 1983:22–25). Similar instances of demographic change have occurred throughout the Pacific during the second half of the twentieth century (Connell 1984). The implications of this change for the future of coralline atolls in general, and the Marshall Islands in particular, are of fundamental importance (see Connell 1986; Pollard 1989).

Perhaps the greatest insights on the present regional demographic organization in the Marshall Islands lie in the basic nature of regional systems in general. Such systems are described in a number of different contexts, often in idealized forms. The best known is Central Place Theory, essentially a model of regional economic organization in terrestrial settings where a series of assumptions—including a featureless unbounded plain, equal supply and demand, and perfect competition—produces a nested hexagonal lattice of interacting communities in a hierarchical settlement system (Lösch 1954; Christaller 1966). In a paper discussing settlement types in the Pacific, Spoehr called centers of population and economic activity "port towns" (Spoehr 1960). Regionally, port-town systems comprise collections of islands that form groups; a main island or settlement, the port, serves each group by providing a

means of interacting with the outside world—exporting surplus goods elsewhere and importing goods and information.

A characteristic common to both of these regional constructs in their idealized forms is some sort of symbiosis between center and hinterland: In Central Place Theory, central places provide goods to a hinterland, which in turn provides the demand needed to support the centers; in a port-town setting, centers provide the means of funneling goods to and from the world market beyond, the hinterland providing either exportable goods or a market for imported goods. In regional systems accompanying chiefdoms, one may characterize symbiosis in less stylized terms as a higher order center providing administrative guidance, specialized goods, and certain specialized services to a hinterland that supports the center through the flow of tribute in the form of subsistence goods and services (e.g., Sahlins 1963).

The regional system that evolved in the Marshall Islands over the past five decades appears to be unstable in part because it has no historical or cultural underpinnings. Perhaps more fundamental, the present system lacks the center-hinterland symbiosis so fundamental to sustainable regional systems. Centers in the Marshall Islands do provide certain services to outer-island units, including certain port functions and special services such as advanced medical treatment. But the hinterlands provide little to their related centers, the requirements of the centers well beyond the hinterland support capability. Moreover, in the process of their demographic evolution over the past five decades, the resident populations of outer-island units at various times were depleted in both total numbers and members of certain age groups as individuals migrated to centers—reducing the capacity of hinterlands to sustain themselves, let alone support concentrated centers of population (Connell 1983:27; see Marshall 1979; Levin and Gorenflo 1994). It is towards increased regional symbiosis, preferably through controlled systematic decentralization, that the Republic of the Marshall Islands must evolve if it hopes to develop into a sustainable, increasingly self-reliant system (Gorenflo 1990). The means to this end, unfortunately, appear anything but clear as the Marshallese population continues its rapid growth and geographic concentration.

NOTES

Several insights on demographic change in the Marshall Islands, and the ramifications of this change, emerged over the years from conversations with H. M. Gunasekera, Fran Hezel, Jim Maragos, Len Mason, Mary McCutcheon, and Han Ridders, though none of

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1. Note that during the Japanese occupation the Jaluit District did not include Enewetak and Ujelang atolls, which administratively were part of the Pohnpei District of the Mandated Territory. Certain census calculations (see Table 7) and vital statistics for the Jaluit District thus do not include data on these two places.

2. Population change similar to that experienced in the Marshall Islands is not unique, sharing key similarities with demographic change documented elsewhere in Micronesia during the Japanese and U.S. administrations. The demographic history of Chuuk State in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) is virtually identical to that of the Marshalls—that is, a generally constant population during the Japanese period followed by rapid population growth during the ensuing U.S. administration (see Gorenflo 1993a). Kosrae and Pohnpei states (likewise in the FSM) similarly experienced rapid population growth during the U.S. administration, though their populations also increased during the Japanese administration (Gorenflo and Levin 1992; Gorenflo 1993b).

3. Because this study seeks to examine demographic change within a functioning sociocultural system, we focus exclusively upon Pacific Islanders inhabiting the Marshall Islands for the years 1920, 1925, 1930, and 1935. The number of Japanese citizens in the Mandated Territory varied during the three decades that Japan controlled the area, growing dramatically in the late 1930s as part of Japan's military buildup; these fluctuating numbers of *imposed* in-migrants would cloud any understanding of regional demographic change.

4. Population growth averaging 7.2 percent annually is virtually impossible in the absence of *massive* immigration, which did not occur in the Marshall Islands between 1967 and 1970. One potential explanation is that the 1970 census of population, already noted as inaccurate for certain districts in the TTPI, may have overcounted the 1970 population for the Marshalls—possibly counting people twice as they moved from place to place or possibly combining places in the Trust Territory incorrectly (and hence attributing to the Marshalls people who in fact did not live there). Attempts to examine the 1970 census data more closely for evidence of such shortcomings were unsuccessful, as the data tapes no longer exist. A second potential explanation is that the 1967 census represents an undercount. Generally, undercounts are much more likely to be a source of census error than overcounts. Unfortunately, in the present setting it is unclear which is responsible for problems in the Marshall Islands data at the end of the 1960s.

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REVIEWS

John Fallon, *The Papua New Guinea Economy: Prospects for Recovery, Reform, and Sustained Growth*. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1992. Pp. 134, appendixes. Free.

Reviewed by Richard Jackson, James Cook University of North Queensland

It is likely that any reader not reasonably well acquainted with the nature of the dynamics of the relationship between Papua New Guinea and Australia, and of the importance of Australia's aid agency (Australian International Development Assistance Bureau, or AIDAB, for whom this report was written) in that relationship, will find this a useful, if rather brief, introduction to the Papua New Guinean economy. It is equally likely that any reader who is so acquainted will find it disturbingly weak.

This monograph bears many hallmarks of the sort of report with which Pacific Island nations have become increasingly and irritatingly familiar: the clipped prescriptions resulting from a brief, statistics-seeking "mission" (in this case, to Papua New Guinea) by an apparently hard-headed, no-nonsense, economically rationalist consultant who is rather too ready to fire off generalized, uncostered, and culturally naive proposals for the almost immediate and curative reform of the subject country's assumed problems. Perhaps such a harsh, generalized statement about this work requires some justification of its own.

First, "brief": I don't know how long the author spent in Papua New Guinea. Clearly he didn't spend long enough there to absorb so much of that country's atmosphere that infects so many of those who do spend years there and that, unfortunately, renders most writers (Sean Dorney being an honorable exception) liable to overlook many of Papua New

Guinea's fairly obvious problems in an attempt to convey that "atmosphere," which is indeed beguiling, across to their readers. There are certainly no such atmospherics here. In fact, all the signs are that Fallon stayed just long enough to spend some time in discussion with Port Moresby business leaders, the (privately sponsored—and excellent) Institute of National Affairs' personnel, senior bureaucrats and one or two academics, and to lay hands on the latest budget papers and the Bank of Papua New Guinea's quarterly statistical reports. However much time was spent preparing this monograph, it is decidedly thin in quantity: eight chapters in sixty-one pages; over half the text is in the form of appendixes, another seventy-two pages.

Secondly, "statistics-seeking": I calculated that one-third of the work is made up of statistical tables or graphs or notes explaining them. A few of these statistics are not easily obtained or commonly available, such as those dealing with petroleum leases. But the majority are widely available from other sources, in particular from the PNG Bank's *Quarterly Bulletins*, which I would recommend strongly to the reader as the best simple source of up-to-date economic information on Papua New Guinea. I have to say that I did find the collation of presented statistics reasonably useful, but then I'm a statistics junkie. I rather suspect less number-minded readers may find much less of value in these forty-four pages than I did.

Thirdly, "hard-headed" and "economically rationalist": I have often worried that, by definition, I have to side with economic rationalists on the grounds that one could not logically support economic irrationalists. This, however, is a false proposition since it supposes rationality can only be bounded by economic qualifiers and that as long as the study of economics retains its own imperfections and irrationalities, then "economic rationality" is not necessarily rational. Fallon, in my view, depends much too heavily on economic sources in this work: Of the forty-five references listed only one is definitely not authored by an economist, while eleven are reports by banks. Consequently, Fallon misses as many (at least) insights into problems of Papua New Guinea's development as do his sources; and, I am sure, many of the finest economists who have worked there (Garnaut, Gregory, and Elek, for example) would willingly admit that their own work has been considerably improved by knowledge of work in other disciplines.

Fourth, and most seriously, "generalized . . . proposals": The author frequently reports "concerns" about existing conditions being "expressed" but rarely attributes these. One such concern, according to Fallon, is that, to date, Papua New Guinea policy has been to "unduly

emphasise the distribution of income and wealth rather than their generation." Unfortunately, however, the only data on income distribution in the forty-four pages of statistics concern mean provincial incomes for 1983. (These are themselves of interest since they indicate a Gini coefficient of 0.3, with the National Capital District and the North Solomons' accounting for only 8 percent of the population but 33 percent of the nation's income.) But there are no figures for income by income groups nationwide and there is no reference to Dudley Jackson's major report on the topic. Given the, to me, very visible wealth of the top 1 percent of PNG residents and the evident cash-penury of hundreds of thousands of rural dwellers, it is difficult for me to agree with this author's view. In the complete absence of any evidence presented here to the contrary, his view that a policy with emphasis on redistribution is a bad thing for Papua New Guinea remains unproven; indeed, it is equally difficult to conclude that such redistributive policies have actually existed, or if they have existed, it is equally unproven that they have worked.

The author's solutions to the problems he perceives are rarely spelled out beyond rather vague general statements on the need to develop infrastructure and human resources. No priorities or, even more strangely, costs are associated with such suggestions. When specifics are touched upon they are, to me again, awesome in terms of the lack of mention of their consequential implications. For example, building on an idea of Brogan, Fallon argues that "it would . . . seem worthwhile to develop options to provide more government services [to rural regions] in return for reform of land tenure arrangements and associated broadening of the tax base" (p. 11). The argument is that, since land held in "traditional" communal tenure cannot be readily monetized, mortgaged, or transferred, the land situation is a major obstacle to modern, capitalist development; this, I agree, is true. Further, since so many rural dwellers do not therefore participate in modern, capitalist development, except at its margins, they do not pay taxes to the state, which must rely for revenue instead on aid and taxes on expatriates and largely expatriate-owned companies; this, I would think, is largely true but not entirely so, since there are in place regressive export taxes on cash crops. Finally, such rural dwellers demand services, which is definitely true, and, therefore, if they want schools, roads, health care, and jobs they should first be required to give up their communal tenure, allow their one asset (land) to be commoditized, and start to pay taxes. In simple economic terms, there is much to be said in favor of such a proposal.

Nevertheless, such a proposal is truly radical. It implies, if it is imple-

mentable, the reconstructing of a whole social system—or, in more personal terms, the sacrifice by the average villager of the one resource in his or her possession—in exchange for participation in the modern, monetized world system. Some might not consider this a worthwhile exchange. All would have to agree that Fallon's aside—"there would undoubtedly be numerous practical problems associated with such schemes" (p. 12)—has to be a leading candidate for the award Understatement of the Decade for the Pacific.

This is only one, if a major one, example of Fallon's making broad statements and letting their implications fall where they may. Thus, I believe my introductory damning of this work is not unjustified. I might also add that spelling errors, missing words, and other editorial lapses are quite frequent, while the prefatory location map (without key) seems to have been inserted as an afterthought.

Now, the average reader might be asking: "Why is this reviewer getting quite so worked up about what is a rather slim, harmless little monograph? Surely, all this energetic vitriol is misplaced?" There is one good reason why I am so anxious to point out what I believe are inadequacies in this work: It is a publication for AIDAB, whose biggest single job is to channel Australian aid to Papua New Guinea. What's more, the nature of that aid has been undergoing radical change since Fallon's work was commissioned—from untied grants-in-aid direct to government towards financing for specifically planned and mutually agreed programs. Such a consideration must qualify any assessment of the value and interest of this monograph. On the one hand, as a publication under AIDAB's name, we should undoubtedly expect a degree of diplomatic tact or blandness, of blurring of some of the harder issues, and we should not be too critical of a reasonably broadbrush approach. On the other hand, one might also expect a far more carefully crafted document free of editorial errors, of unjustified (as opposed to unjustifiable) assertions, and of poorly patched-together structures. I don't especially enjoy being acidulous, but really this just will not do, especially when I suspect that it will have been very influential in determining the new guidelines for Australia's aid strategies in Papua New Guinea.

Gary Smith, *Micronesia: Decolonization and US Military Interests in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands*. Canberra: Peace Research Center, Australian National University. \$A12.00.

Reviewed by Norman Meller, University of Hawaii

The introduction of *Micronesia* opens with the declaration that “the islands of Micronesia north of the equator have been denied the political independence which Britain, Australia, and New Zealand have conceded to similar island states in the South Pacific” (p. 1). This curbing of “Micronesian independence in the name of military exigency,” the author says, “represents a major US diplomatic failure, undermining US credentials as a champion of democracy and self-determination. . . . The reasons for the failure lie in the exaggeration of Micronesia’s strategic importance to the United States, and the dominance of the military in decolonization policy making” (p. 3). Much of Gary Smith’s 131-page monograph then concerns itself with developing this thesis.

To summarize the content, I offer the author’s own words: “First, it looks historically at the impact of US military activities and strategic assumptions on the Micronesian islanders since the 1940s, and on the process of Micronesian political self-determination in the 1970s and 1980s as Micronesians sought a new post-trusteeship status. . . . The analysis focuses on political and economic impacts rather than social and cultural developments in Micronesia. It provides [very] detailed coverage of [the complicated negotiations with] Palau, the Marshall Islands, and the Northern Marianas . . . and concentrates on a key interaction: between US military concerns and Micronesian political status. . . . Second, the study presses a reexamination of US military and strategic assumptions . . . that Micronesia is of vital strategic importance to the United States. . . . Third, there is an assessment of the ambiguity of the new international status of free association, in which Micronesians have comprehensive control over foreign affairs while the US has control over all matters affecting security or defense” (pp. 3, 4).

The monograph concludes with an eleven-page bibliography of published materials referred to in the text, probably as extensive and current a listing of sources on the negotiating of the Micronesian compacts of free association as is presently available.

There is no question but that the United States used its dominant position in the Trust Territory to secure military benefits—both existing and prospective—under the compacts of free association that the Micronesians otherwise would not have committed themselves to. Except to the practitioner of realpolitik, it is not a pretty picture. However, this all took shape over many years in an atmosphere of nit-picking wrangling conducted by teams of high-powered lawyers representing the parties, in which monetary benefits for the Micronesians continued to mount as consideration for overcoming their resistance. Smith fails to

develop this element, just as he is too simplistic in attributing everything that has occurred to the military's dictation of American policy toward Micronesia. He does not adequately recognize the multidimensioned character of the United States' policy toward Micronesia, involving the Office of the President, various executive departments besides Defense, and key congressmen playing stellar roles. Nor does he acknowledge the multidimensional political facets that characterized the Micronesian ranks: For example, one leading politician in Palau supported independence, free association, and commonwealth at different times during the negotiations.

The case made by Smith for the freely associated entities being only "quasi-states" because of the powers retained by the United States is not convincing. On the one hand, the Marshalls and the Federated States of Micronesia have not only been admitted to the United Nations as sovereign states, but to date some thirty-seven foreign countries have established diplomatic relationships with them.

Similarly, to write off the islands of Micronesia as having no military relevance to any future events in Southeast Asia—as a base for small American mobile forces destined for trouble spots in that region—is to assert a prescience this reviewer does not possess. One thing that appears probable, with mainland China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan now expressing increased interest in the islands, is that change in the present status quo that may have military significance is in the offing.

BOOKS NOTED

RECENT PACIFIC ISLANDS PUBLICATIONS: SELECTED ACQUISITIONS, SEPTEMBER–OCTOBER 1993

This list of significant new publications relating to the Pacific Islands was selected from new acquisitions lists received from Brigham Young University–Hawaii, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Bernice P. Bishop Museum, University of Auckland, East-West Center, University of the South Pacific, National Library of Australia, and the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau's Centre for Pacific Development and Training. Other libraries are invited to send contributions to the Books Noted Editor for future issues. Listings reflect the extent of information provided by each institution.

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CONTRIBUTORS

Peter W. Black, Anthropology Program, George Mason University,
Fairfax, Va. 22030-4444, U.S. E-mail: PBlack@mason1.gmu.edu

Kenneth Fakamuria, Computer Centre, University of the South Pacific,
P.O. Box 1168, Suva, Fiji

L. J. Gorenflo, L.E.A.R.N., 2204 Chestnut St., Port Townsend, Wash.
98368, U.S.

Peter Larmour, Department of Political Science, University of Tas-
mania, GPO Box 252C, Hobart, Tasmania 7001, Australia. E-mail:
P.Larmour@polsci.utas.edu.au

Michael J. Levin, Population Division, U.S. Bureau of the Census,
Washington, D.C. 20233, U.S.

John Lynch, Pacific Languages Unit, University of the South Pacific,
P.O. Box 12, Vila, Vanuatu. E-mail: Lynch@vanuatu.usp.ac.fj

Rhys Richards, 73 Seaview Rd., Paremata, Wellington, New Zealand

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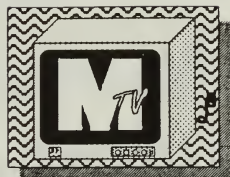
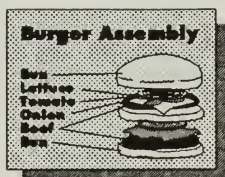
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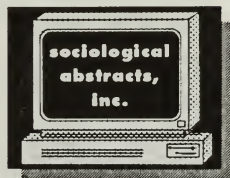
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Ethnicity and Multiethnicity

A Call for Papers

Brigham Young University - Hawai'i
Division of Social Sciences and
Institute for Polynesian Studies
May 10-13, 1995

The Division of Social Sciences and the Institute for Polynesian Studies will hold a conference on **Ethnicity and Multiethnicity** from May 10 to 13, 1995. We invite proposals for individual papers and panel sessions. Our goal is to examine the nature of ethnicity from both theoretical and experiential perspectives; the possibility of multiple ethnicities held by individuals and groups; and the implications of multiethnicity for ethnic theory.

We hope to have presentations from many points of view: scholars who emphasize cultural aspects of ethnicity as well as those who stress institutions, interests, biology, political economy, psychological identity, and other perspectives. We are as interested in the creation and dissolution of group identities as in their character and maintenance. In addition to theoretical explorations, we hope to receive proposals based on the experiences of particular groups--in North America, in the Pacific, and in other parts of the world. Studies, theoretical or empirical, of the intersection of ethnicity with other attributes such as gender, class, and nation are welcome, as are treatments of special topics such as Afrocentricity and world systems.

Those interested in participating should submit proposals for papers or panels by August 15, 1994, so that the Institute can act on them by October 1, 1994. Please submit a one-page summary of each presentation and include a short c.v. for each participant. Papers accepted for the conference will be due at the Institute by April 1, 1995. For the purpose of publishing an anthology, as well as a special issue of the journal *Pacific Studies*, on the conference theme, the Institute reserves the right of first refusal on all conference papers.

The conference will include activities emblematic of the ethnicities of our region, such as an afternoon of cultural demonstrations and an evening banquet and show at the Polynesian Cultural Center, which is affiliated with the University.

Mail proposals to: Paul Spickard, Division of Social Sciences, Brigham Young University - Hawai'i, Lai'e, Hawai'i 96762, USA. If you have questions, please call Dr. Spickard at 808-293-3830 or send a message via Internet: BYUH.ADMIN.SPICKARP@BYUH.EDU.



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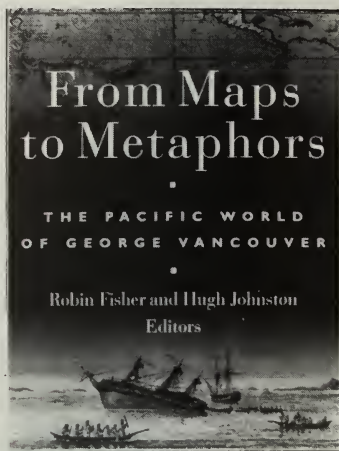
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